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DESSERTS
MAGAZINE

Issue #5

...for people who eat dessert first.

Bake and Share

Editor's Note

Baking and socializing are two of my favorite holiday pursuits. But as the season progresses and schedules get squeezed, it becomes just a bit challenging to play hostess. That's why I love to host a cookie swap, an easy and rewarding way to combine baking, fun, and gift giving.

Since we do not want to exclude anyone, we changed the rules for our cookie swap, where each of our guests have a choice to bake one kind of cookie or bring cookies from their favorite bakery in quantities sufficient to share with everyone. Later, each guest leaves the party with a variety of cookies, ready to share right away or to freeze and enjoy them later in the season.

In this issue, we offer many recipes for those who prefer to bake. And, for those who prefer to bring the cookies we found great sources online that will ship great tasting, made from scratch, all natural cookies right to your door. So, gather your family and friends and enjoy baking and sharing cookies.

Do not forget to enter our giveaway. I wish you all a happy, healthy, and prosperous 2009!

Until next year,

Vera Shepherd

Desserts Magazine

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Cover Art by Vera Shepherd. Cover Photo by Helen Dujardin. Cookies photos from top row/left to right: Meeta Khurana, Gemmi Rizzi, Steve Ho, Stephanie Whitten. Middle row left/right: Vera Kuznetsova, Charles Schiller, Michelle Laffler, Jennifer Yu. Bottom row left/right: Helen Dujardin, Vera Kuznetsova, Amy Chen, Arfi Binstead.

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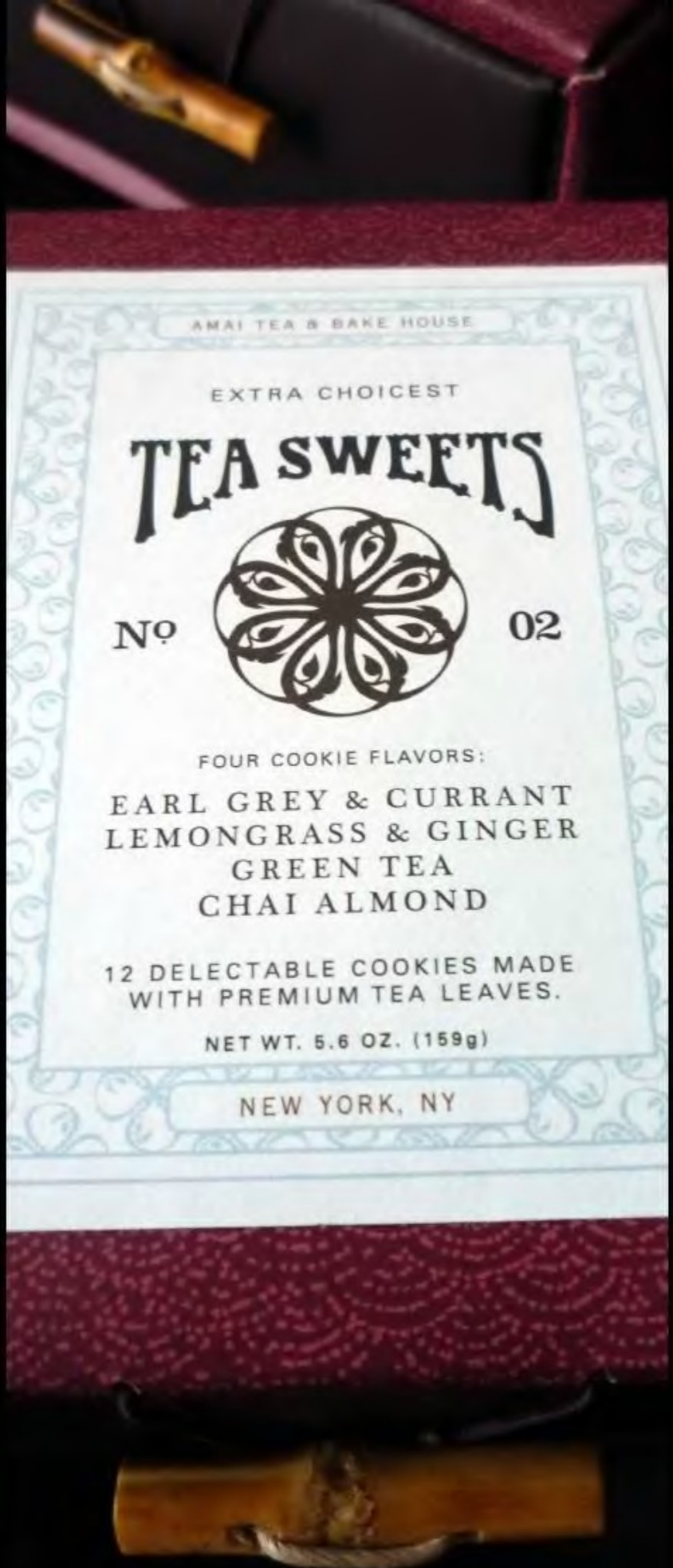
Cookies Gift Giving Guide

Milk and cookies conjure sweet memories from childhood. A walk down memory lane is just a click away. We searched for the best cookies you can find online. Call us "cookie snobs", but when it comes to cookies not any cookies will do. We tasted these cookies and we are sure that recipients of these cookies are bound to be impressed, too!

Kelli Bernard, owner/baker, a tea aficionado, a former website designer, opened Amai Tea and Bake House one year ago. It's a quaint tea house without the formalities. She bakes seven different flavors of tea into these cookies from scratch by hand.

When you pull the bamboo clasp, you will find a drawer filled with four Amai different flavors shortbread cookies infused with different teas, and each wrapped in a 'tea proverb'. This reusable red gift box contains 12 cookies, three of each of the following flavors: Award winning, **Green Tea** (Editor's Favorite), a sugar cookie made with matcha (the tea of traditional Japanese tea ceremonies); **Earl Grey & Currant** (Editor's Favorite), a buttery cookie made with tea-soaked currants and organic bergamot-scented black tea; **Lemongrass & Ginger** (Editor's Favorite), a lightly spicy cookie made with fine pieces of crystallized ginger and lemongrass tea; and, **Chai Almond**, a crunchy cookie made with chopped almonds and chai tea. These cookies are great with a cup of your favorite tea or by itself. www.amainyc.com



Inside Amai 12-Cookie Tea Sweets Gift Box...
THREE
LEMONGRASS & GINGER
TEA SWEETS
ONE'S TRUE FORM,
LIKE TEA,
REVEALS ITSELF
IN HOT WATER.
FROM
AMAI TEA & BAKE HOUSE
NET WT. 1.4 OZ (40g)
THREE
L GREY & CURRANT
TEA SWEETS
TEA AND THE
HEART ARE
BETTER STRONG
AND DEEP.
FROM
AMAI TEA & BAKE HOUSE
NET WT. 1.7 OZ (48g)
THREE
GREEN TEA
TEA SWEETS
TEA IS
LIQUID WISDOM.
FROM
AMAI TEA & BAKE H
NET WT. 1.1 OZ (31g)
THREE
CHAI ALMOND
TEA SWEETS
CONTENTMENT IS A
GLASS FULL OF TEA
AND A PIECE
OF SUGAR
IN THE MOUTH.
FROM
AMAI TEA & BAKE HOUSE
NET WT. 1.4 OZ (40g)

damn good
cookies™
The kind you wish
mother would have

Inside
our box of
Damn Good
Cookie...

Mary Winslow, owner of Chocolate Gourmet, started her business just baking cakes for brides and grooms. Since then Mary added cookies and truffles to her repetoire. Chocolate Gourmet has a retail location at Andersonville Galleria on 5247 N. Clark in Chicago. These little cookies with big attitude are baked the day they are shipped and individually packed to ensure freshness.

Mary makes the most amazing cookies.Do not be fooled by the size of these cookies as they are full of flavor in each bite. She sassily labeled each cookie. They are available in six flavors: Chubby Wubby Chocolate, Controlling Coconut; Maternal Macadamia nut, Overprotective Pecan, Rockabye Raspberry, and their newest flavor Precocious Peanut. The flaky rulegach are just as irresistible with four flavors: Cherished Cherry, Hold My Hand Hazelnut, Peach, and Save Your Appetite Apricot. We loved these cookies even with all their issues. Ahh... do we have to pick our favorites?!?! Controlling Coconut, Chubby Wubby Chocolate, Cherished Cherry, Precocious Peanut. Sorry mom, but these are "Damn Good Cookies"!

The cookies are sold by the box, the single-flavor boxes with 14 to 24 pieces. The cookies are shipped throughout the U.S. except Hawaii and Alaska. To taste this little cookies with a bold flavor go to www.chocolategourmet.com for more information or to place an order.

Chubby Wubby Chocolate made of bittersweet ganache sandwiched by two soft rich bittersweet chocolate cookies each studded with bittersweet chocolate chips. (Editor's Favorite)

Controlling Coconut crisp coconut encrusted cookie rolled in powder sugar. (Editor's Favorite)

Maternal Macadamia Nut a crisp coconut encrusted cookie rolled in powder sugar crisp, rich sugar cookie with macadamia nuts and a sprinkling of vanilla sugar

Overprotective Pecan cookie coated pecan halves and bittersweet chocolate chips

Rockabye Raspberry crisp sweet sugar cookie coated with vanilla sugar and filled with homemade raspberry conserve. (Editor's Favorite)

Precocius Peanut Butter a rich cookie filled with a creamy white chocolate peanut butter cream and topped with a honey roasted peanut. The best peanut butter cookie we ever had! (Editor's Favorite)

the good cook

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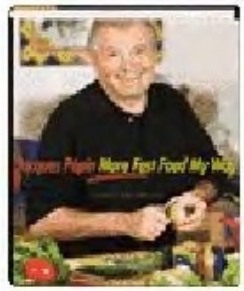

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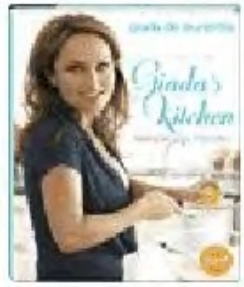

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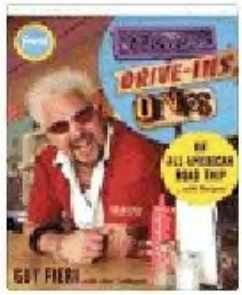

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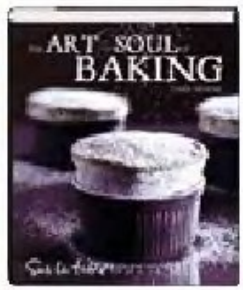

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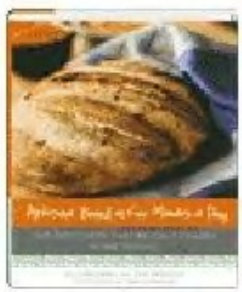

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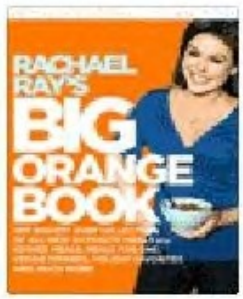

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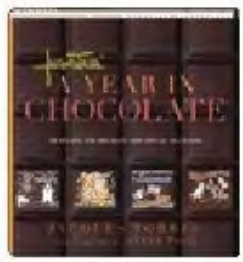

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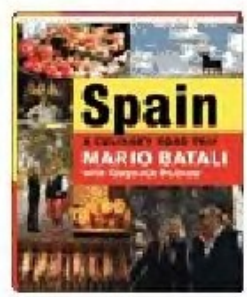

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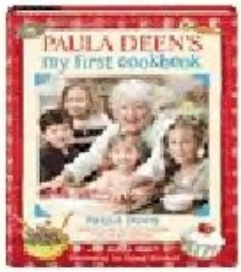

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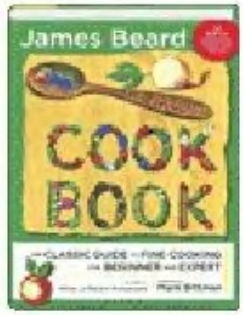

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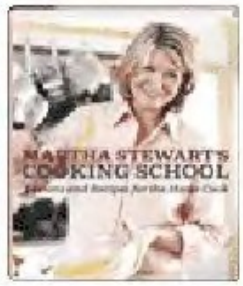

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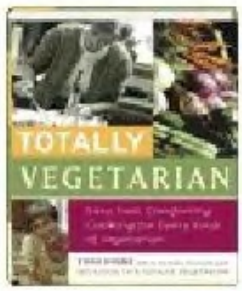

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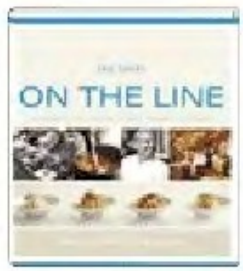

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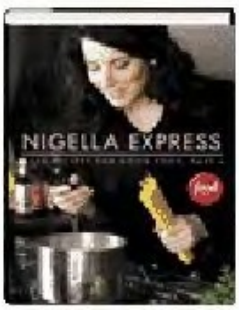

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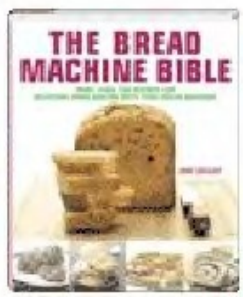

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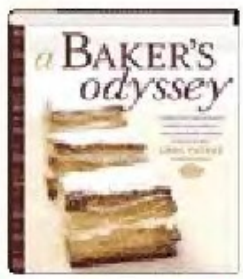

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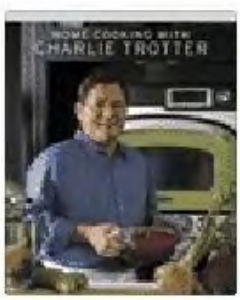

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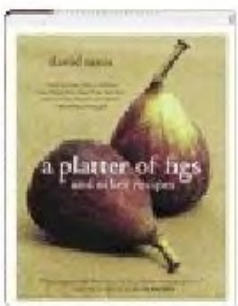

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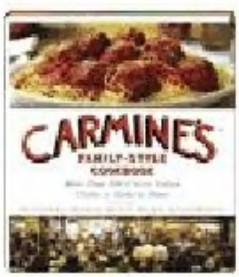

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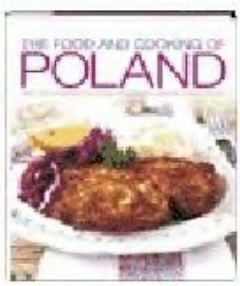

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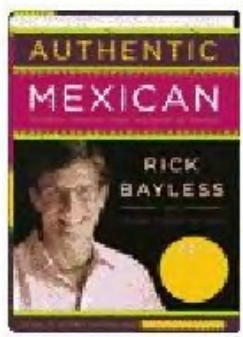


551193 ~~$30.00~~ $1

Big, chewy, "homemade" cookies....simply "deluscious!"

Since 2002, Lydia Shayne, "The Cookie Diva" is the owner/baker of Deluscious Cookies has been baking cookies for Reese Witherspoon, Renee Zellweger, Courteney Cox Arquette, Steven Spielberg, to name a few. She makes all the cookies from scratch using only the finest ingredients. With an extensive variety of over 35 flavors it will sure satisfy everyone's taste.

In the Classic Collections, there are 16 flavors to choose from and 24 flavors in the Courture Collections, that are only available for limited periods of time throughout the year with flavors like **Red Velvet Cookie**, a heart-shaped Southern red velvet cake-like textured cookie filled with buttercream and white chocolate, hand dipped in dark chocolate and topped with a hand-carved white chocolate heart; the **Apricot Marzipan Almond Cookie** made with fresh, organic apricots blended with marzipan, roasted almonds and dark chocolate;and, the **Wild Blueberry Lemon and White Chocolate Cookie**, made of dried wild blueberries, freshly squeezed Meyer lemons juice blended together with premium white chocolate to form a perfect balance of flavors in your mouth. You have a choice to customize your dozen or choose one of their already chosen dozen. Each cookie is individually wrapped, labeled and packed. With a day's notice, drivers will hand delivers the fresh baked cookies and cold milk in old-fashioned glass bottles in the Los Angeles area or ships priority overnight and 2nd day without the milk throughout the US and Canada.

These big, chewy, "homemade" cookies are simply "DELUSCIOUS!" www.delusciouscookies.com

What's inside Deluscious Basic Dozen?

3 Chocolate Decadence

A chocolate lover's paradise. This dark, rich cookie is rolled in powdered sugar and baked to a brownie/ truffle texture. (Editor's Favorite)

3 Chocolate Chip

These chewy–on-the-inside, crispy-on-the-outside cookies with a blend of three different kinds chunks of chocolate and mounds of chips held together with our.

3 Oatmeal Raisin

Thick and chewy with the finest plump raisins and perfect amount of cinnamon. (Editor's Favorite)

3 Cinnamon Sugar

A crunchy topping on a chewy, buttery cookie. You'll never eat a regular snicker doodles again.

Since 2005, mother and daugther team, Jennie Näss and Vera Mirkovic have brought old and new traditions to make simply elegant, hand-detailed cookies from scratch. Each cookie has a story behind it, that makes it unique.

They hand make all their gourmet cookies in small batches to ensure freshness with no preservatives, no artificial ingredients, and only with the best ingredients to create these little cookies with big flavor.

Jennie and Vera's Cookies are wrapped personally by Jennie and Vera in so simply elegant white boxes. Tied beautifully with a black or white grosgrain ribbon, each package always includes a special handwritten note from Jennie and Vera, giving thanks and appreciation for your business. When you open their signature elegant white box you can't help but feel special, as it leaves a lasting impression of taste, grace and classic style. To order and find out more about their cookies visit www.jennieandverascookies.com

Inside our Jennie and Vera's Cookies Box...

You Are a Peach!
a buttery cookie filled with a unique blend of peach and pear marmalade, laced with peach liqueur and combined with walnut bits, the cookie is sprinkled with fine sugar. It looks just like a small peach!

Lemon Thumbprints
Lemon zest combined with fresh lemon juice, Madagascar bourbon vanilla, dusted with confectioners' sugar makes for this cookie to be perfect with afternoon tea.

A minimum order of two dozen if selecting one variety, or order a collection from The Cookie Couture Collection which offers one dozen of three varieties.

***Vera's Walnut Cookies**
are a sophisticated, decadent but not too sweet cookie made from finely ground walnuts and filled with a light and creamy walnut center flavored with Croatian walnut liqueur.

***Chocolate Spice Cookie**
provides an interesting combination of red and black pepper, a hint of cinnamon, ground chocolate and cocoa. Intensifying the chocolate flavor leaving you with a lingering sensation of spice and chocolate.

***Editor's Favorite**

Who
said you
cannot have sushi
for dessert?!?
Can you tell which
sushi came straight
from the sushi
bar!?!?

SUEDY'S KOO-KI SUSHI

Karen "Suedy" Sasaki and Janice Murai are the owners and creators of Koo-ki Sushi, a cookie-based "sushi" with chocolate and confections for the toppings and fillings. Suedy's Koo-Ki Sushi is known for their unique cookie confections that resemble sushi, but do not taste like sushi. These delectable gourmet morsels come in a variety of distinctive flavors and sushi shapes that look like they came straight from the sushi bar! These gourmet treats are perfect for those who love chocolate, sushi or both.

Every piece of Suedy's Koo-Ki Sushi is handmade using only the finest ingredients like premium chocolate, crispy rice cookies and candies instead of fish, seaweed, and rice. Suedy's Koo-Ki Sushi confections are combined with exotic flavors like green tea, piña colada, lemon and caramel to make imaginative desserts.

Order these "sushi" as individual pieces on chocolate plates, or in beautiful multi-piece Bento or Washi boxes. Get a pair of Choc Sticks (chocolate chopsticks) that are inlaid with pieces of crème de menthe, mocha bean or strawberry chocolate. They are perfect swirled into a cup of coffee, hot chocolate or eaten alone.

Suedy's Koo-Ki Sushi also features traditional, hand-decorated Lucky Cats that aren't made of wood, ivory or porcelain, but creamy, solid Belgian chocolate! The legendary Lucky Cat is said to bring good fortune!

Suedy's Koo-Ki Sushi also makes Kanpai* Cups, chocolate sake cups, which come in four delicious flavors: green tea, strawberry, white chocolate, and dark chocolate marble. Each sake cup is decorated by hand with a finely-detailed floral trim except for the dark chocolate, which is marbled with creamy milk chocolate. "Kanpai!", pronounced "kom-pi", is Japanese for "Cheers!" Although tasty on their own, these Kanpai Cups can be used to serve sake, your favorite liqueur or sorbet for a luscious finish to your meal.

Suedy's Koo-Ki Sushi is available online at www.kookisushi.com or by phone at (866) GO-KOOKI. You can also visit Suedy's Koo-Ki Sushi at their retail location: 830 Jury Court, Suite 1 San Jose, CA 95112. Starting at $12 for single pieces and up to $75 for a classic lacquerware gift box of "sushi".

Koo-Ki Sushi Fruit-O-Maki

Fruit-O-Maki (Futo Maki – Rolled Sushi): A medley of fruit-flavored pieces, caramel and dark chocolate rolled inside a crisp rice cookie and a dark chocolate wrapper. Koo-Ki Sushi Choc-Sticks (chocolate chopsticks).

Inside Our Koo-Ki Sushi Special Sushi Box....

Suedy's "sushi bar favorites" are artfully arranged inside a beautiful handcrafted Japanese washi paper boxes. It includes decorative greenery, Peach Blossom, Suedy's "Shoga", Green Tea "Wasabi", and "Shoyu" Fish, 5 pieces "sushi" (1 piece each: Apricot Row, Berry Maguro, Great White Sushi, Lemon-Egg, Tako-Nut)

1. **Apricot Row** (Ikura - Salmon Roe): A crisp rice cookie under rows of apricot flavored "gummi-eggs" then wrapped in dark chocolate.
2. **Great White Sushi** (Ebi – Shrimp): A creamy white "shrimp" with a smooth almond filling atop a drop of green tea "wasabi" on a crisp rice cookie.
3. **Lemon-Egg** (Tamago – Egg) A lemon flavored "egg omelet" with a luscious lemon meringue filling draped over a crisp rice cookie and tied with dark chocolate.
4. **Berry Maguro** (Maguro – Tuna): A strawberry flavored chocolate "tuna filet" with a milk chocolate hazelnut center and a touch of green tea "wasabi" on a crisp rice cookie.
5. **Tako-Nut** (Tako-Octopus) A white, coconut flavored "octopus" slice filled with chewy coconut over a light touch of green tea wasabi on a crisp rice cookie.
6. **Suedy's "shoga"** delicate pieces of ginger flavored white chocolate
7. **Green Tea "Wasabi"** a light green confection flavored with Japanese green tea
8. **Peach Blossom** a creamy peach flavored white flower on top of a mini krisp rice cookie.

Suedy's "shoyu" Fish. Dark Chocolate flavored syrup. To order visit Koo-Ki Sushi at www.kookisushi.com

Inside Suedy's
Koo-Ki Sushi
Special Sushi
Box....
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8

Handcrafted
Japanese
washi paper
boxes.
KOO-KI
SUSHI
The Art of Sushi
in Chocolate

Dawn Casale grew up baking with her mother and her siblings. Once an accessories manager at Barneys, she started her one-person business, One Girl Cookies, in 2000. The bite-size cookies with personalities were baked in her small kitchen at her Greenwich Village apartment. Much of One Girl's early business came from customers, colleagues and vendors, Dawn had dealt with at Barneys.

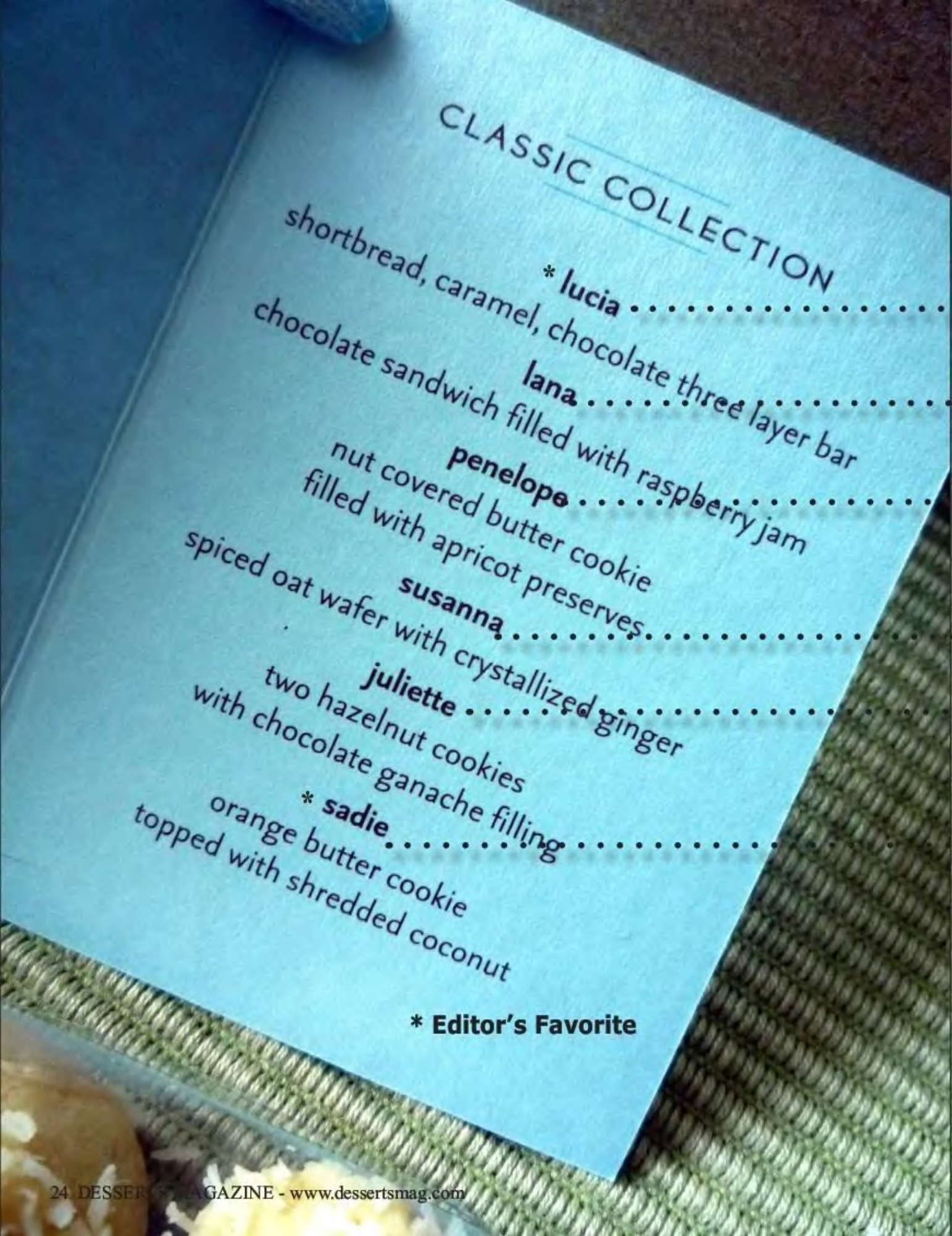
By early 2002, business has expanded and she hired a baker, David Crofton, (who is now co-owner and husband) and moved into a professional kitchen space in Manhattan . Soon after One Girl moved and opened a retail shop and a coffee bar at 68 Dean Street in Brooklyn, just off a trendy strip of Smith Street in Boerum Hill .

One Girl Cookies are still handmade, the size of a bite or two, and include varieties like a hazelnut sandwich filled with chocolate cinnamon ganache and pumpkin whoopie pie. To order these delicious petite cookies visit www.onegirlcookies.com

Pumpkin Whoopie Pie

A bite-size pumpkin cakey-cookie filled with cream cheese frosting...Whoopie!

Inside One Girl Cookies Classic Collection Box...


CLASSIC COLLECTION
* lucia
shortbread, caramel, chocolate three layer bar
lana
chocolate sandwich filled with raspberry jam
penelope
nut covered butter cookie
filled with apricot preserves
susanna
spiced oat wafer with crystallized ginger
juliette
two hazelnut cookies
with chocolate ganache filling
* sadie
orange butter cookie
topped with shredded coconut
* Editor's Favorite

te ganache filling
sadie
e butter cookie
th shredded coconut
ONE GIRL
FROM FRESH
ALL HAND MADE
INGREDIENTS
COOKIES
One Girl Cookies is an artisanal cookie
located in Cobble Hill, Brooklyn. All
handmade using the freshest ingredi
Gift boxes feature our signature
charm with a modern twist
photo of our families,
ox each cookie
closed with

How to Host a Cookie Swap...

A Cookie Swap is a great way to gather family, friends, and others that you might not get to see during the busy holiday season. It's also a nice alternative for exchanging gifts! This is how...

PICK A DATE. Early December is the best time for most people. Choose a weekend afternoon or weekday early evening when everyone can spend about two hours chatting and nibbling.

SEND OUT INVITATIONS. It is best to mail them out a month before your cookie exchange to give your guests plenty of time to schedule the event and do their baking. Keep your guest list to a manageable number. Large enough to enjoy an interesting variety of cookies, but not so large that you and your guests feel overwhelmed. Between eight and twelve people is about right.

Cookie Swap Basic Rule

Feel free to adjust the rule to best suit you and your guests.

BAKE/BRING Each guest choose a cookie recipe and bake 4 cookies for each invited guest. (If there will be six guests in all, including the hostess, that means each guest will bring 2 dozen cookies.). Or, bring cookies from his or her favorite bakery. Let the hostess know what type of cookie you will be baking. Guests should also bring copies of their recipes to share at the cookie swap.

SWAP Once photos have been taken and your guests had some fun, it's time to swap. Each guest will get to take one dozen of each cookie. Don't forget containers for taking the cookies home! (Have extra take-home containers on hand for guests that may have forgotten to bring one.) To sample or not to sample... It's up to you. Some cookie swaps encourage tasting, others are all about taking cookies home. Be sure, though, to provide light snacks. Coffee, tea or homemade beverages.

Cookie Swap Hostess Ideas

One way to organize your cookie swap is by suggesting a cookie category to each of your guests. That way you'll give everyone an enjoyable challenge—without being overly rigid—and you'll end up with an attractive array of cookies.

The Office Cookie Swap. Gather with co-workers one day after work to celebrate the holidays, or if you work from home, turn your office cookie swap into an informal networking party.

The "Block Party" Cookie Swap. Invite just the neighbors on the block for a cozy winter gathering.

The Parents Cookie Swap. Is a nice way to get to know other parents from school, dance class, or the soccer team.

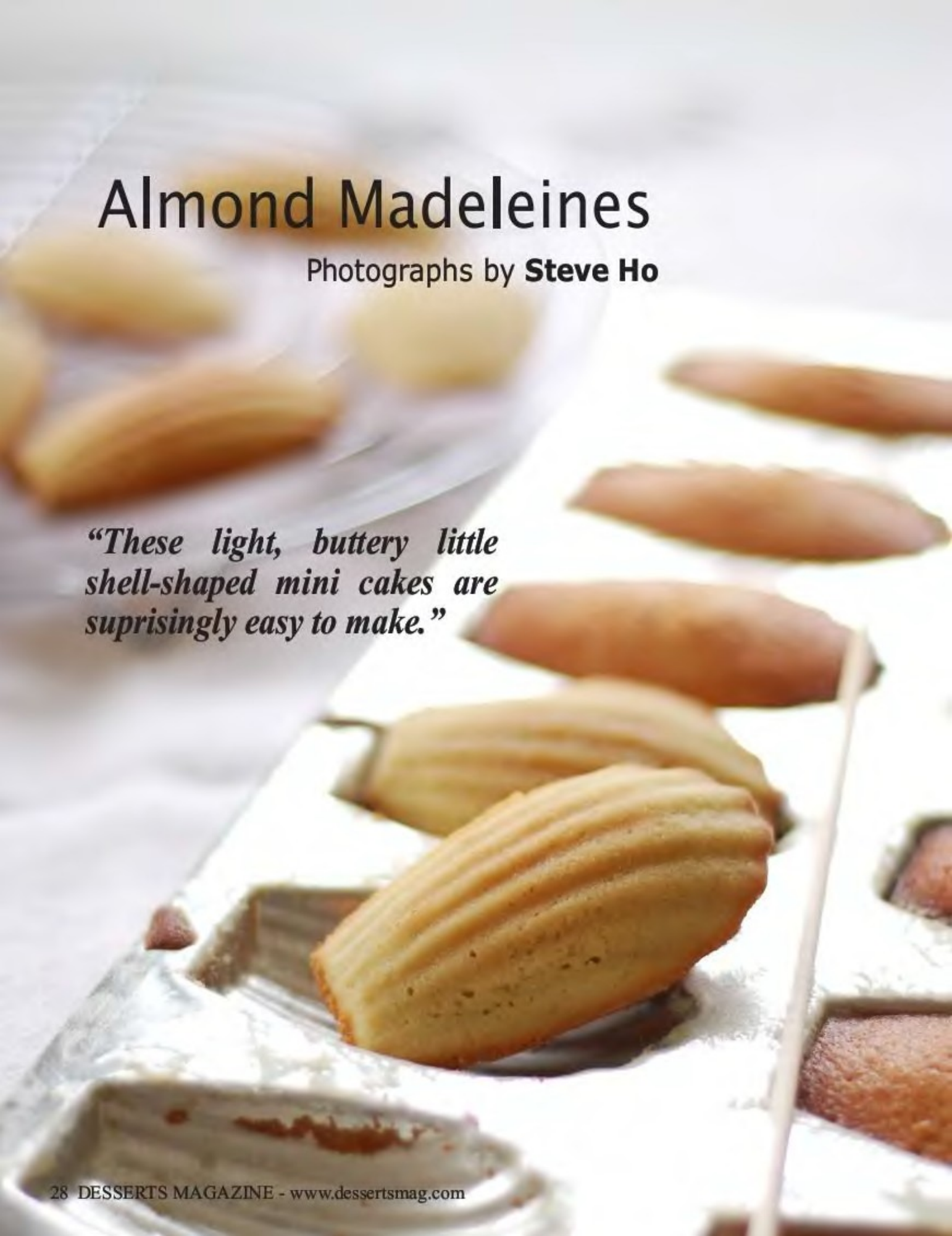
The Book Club, Knitting or Theater Group Cookie Swap. Is easy to organize when you have a group you already meet with regularly.

The Kids Cookie Swap. A fun, creative activity to get the kids involved. Have the kids in class, or a scout group, exchange festive cookies instead of store-bought gifts.

The Mothers & Daughters Cookie Swap. A great way to share special memories for moms and their daughters, especially if you

Almond Madeleines

Photographs by **Steve Ho**



"These light, buttery little shell-shaped mini cakes are suprisingly easy to make."

Almond Madeleines

Makes 24 cookies

4 oz. (113g) unsalted butter
3/4 cup (94g, 3 oz.) all-purpose flour
1/2 cup almond flour or 2 oz. (57g) of whole almonds, finely ground
1/2 (112.5g, 4 oz.) cup granulated sugar
2 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
3 eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt

1. In a saucepan, melt the butter over medium heat. Stir constantly until the solids at the bottom of the pan is golden brown and the butter develop a sweet, nutty aroma, about 5 minutes. Immediately strain the butter into a glass bowl to cool and to prevent the butter from burning. Let cool completely.

2. In a large bowl, whisk the all-purpose flour, almond flour, and sugar, set aside. Stir the extract and melted butter, set aside. In another large bowl, combine the eggs, salt, and whisk until combined. Mix in the flour mixture until combined. Fold in the melted butter mixture with the whisk until combined. Do not over mix. Cover the bowl and refrigerate for at least 2 hours or overnight.

3. Set the rack in the middle level of the oven. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C). Butter two 12-mold madeleine pans, dust with flour, and tap out the excess flour. Fill each molds with the cold madeleine batter about half way. Bake until the cakes are golden brown, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove the pans from the oven and unmold the madeleines immediately onto racks to cool.

4. Before serving, dust the madeleines with confectioners' sugar. They are best served on the same day they are baked.

Note: If you only have one pan or your molds are small, you can reuse the same pan, just clean it in between, then butter and flour it again.

If you have a pastry bag, pipe the batter into the molds.

Chocolate Chai Snickerdoodles

Recipe and Photograph by Celine of **Have Cake, Will Travel!**

This recipe has been Veganized and adapted from a recipe, whose author adapted it from a cookbook...This has got to be one of the most "adapted" recipe I know of.

1/4 cup granulated sugar
1/4 cup light brown sugar, packed
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon dry ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
1/16 teaspoon ground black pepper
2Tablespoonsunsweetened cocoa powder
1/4 cup softened vegan margarine
1 Ener-g Egg replacer [1 1/2 teaspoon powder + 2 Tablespoons warm water, whisked until foamy]
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
1/2 cup + 1 Tablespoon all-purpose flour (do not spoon it, scoop it!)
3/8 teaspoon baking powder

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Line a cookie sheet with parchment paper or silicone mat.

2. Mix sugar and spices in small bowl. Remove 2 tablespoons of the sugar mixture place in a small bowl. Add cocoa to the sugar mixture and stir to blend.

3. Beat margarine until fluffy. Add cocoa mixture and beat until creamy. Add egg and extract. Mix in the flour and baking powder until combined.

4. Form 1-1/2 tablespoons balls. Roll the dough in the sugar mixture and coat it well. Place the cookies 2 inches apart on the cookie sheet. Flatten the cookies a little with the palm of your hand. These cookies don't spread out much while baking. Bake for 13 minutes. Let cool on the cookie sheet before removing. Makes 6 cookies

Green Tea Sweets

by Kelli Bernard of **Amai Tea and Bake House**
Yield (2" leaf shape): Approx. 25 cookies

3/4 cup (2.25 oz) Confectioners sugar
5 oz unsalted butter, cut into cubes
1-3/4 cup (8.5 oz) all-purpose flour
3 large egg yolks
1-1/2 Tablespoons Matcha (powdered green tea)
1 cup granulated sugar (for coating)

Kelli Bernard, owner/baker of Amai Tea and Bake House, is sharing this award winning and bestseller Green Tea Sweets recipe. Now you can make Amai Green Tea Sweets or for those days you do not feel like baking you can buy them at www.amainyc.com and have it delivered right at your doorstep!

1. Line a sheet pan with parchment paper.

2. Whisk the confectioner's sugar and green tea together in a bowl.

3. Add the butter and green tea/sugar mixture to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment. Mix until smooth and light in color.

4. Add the flour and mix until well combined.

5. Add the egg yolks and mix just until the eggs are fully incorporated and a mass forms.

6. Form the dough into a disk and chill in the refrigerator until firm (about 30 minutes).

7. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (177 degrees C). Roll the dough out to ½" thickness.

8. Cut the dough with a leaf cookie cutter.

9. Toss each cut cookie in a bowl of granulated sugar to coat.

10. Place the sugar-coated cookie on a parchment lined pan. Bake at 350 degrees F (177 degrees C) for 12-15 minutes, or until slightly golden around the edges.

Up Close and Personal with Kelli Bernard ...

Best baking advice you've ever received:
Chill the bowl before whipping cream.

Alternative dream job:
I would love to do something scholarly like be a history professor. Either that or a piano player, but I have no musical talent.

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten:
Probably something unidentified in China. I didn't ask what a lot of things were when I was there, I just ate what was given to me. I do know there were things like blood soup and jellyfish, but those weren't so bad. I also had a really tough piece of sushi in Japan that was hard to finish, but I wasn't able to understand the name of the fish due to the language barrier. Maybe that's the benefit of eating abroad, you're willing to try more because you don't know exactly what you're getting into!

Favorite dessert(s):
When I'm craving something sweet in the afternoon, I always turn to brownies since they are rich, chewy and chocolaty. I also can't get enough of the steamed caramel cakes we make at Amai.

Favorite cookbook(s):
I really enjoy the Tartine cookbook by Elisabeth Prueitt and Chad Robertson. It has a great variety of desserts, the photography is beautiful, and most importantly the recipes actually turn out well when you try them at home. I visited the Tartine bakery in San Francisco on one of my trips a few years back, and really enjoyed their bread pudding. The cookbook reminds me of the great time I had there.

Favorite restaurant(s):
Casa Mono in Gramercy. It's very close to Amai, and we love to go there for a relaxing dinner.

Favorite tea brand(s) and flavor(s):
I drink a lot of loose leaf tea from Ito-En, which has a shop on Madison Avenue in New York City. I love their Shiso Sencha and Kaiseki Hojicha. The Kaiseki Hojicha has a unique, nutty flavor and I can leave the tea in the water for as long as I want and it never gets bitter. This is great for when I'm running around the bakery and forget to take the tea bag out in time.

Favorite kitchen tool(s):
A bench scraper and bowl scraper. The best part is that they cost less than $5 and make so many tasks easier. A 6QT Kitchen Aid Stand Mixer is also essential.

Best baking tip(s) for the home baker:
Since ovens can vary, it helps to have an oven thermometer so you know if your oven is running true to temperature. I also believe in using your nose to tell if something is done. If you can smell it, chances are good it is close to being done.

What do you do when you are not baking?
If I'm not baking, I'm usually packaging and shipping whatever was just baked!

Where do you look for inspiration?
I look for inspiration anywhere in New York City. There is so much diversity here, and I am constantly exposed to new flavors, shapes and textures everywhere I turn. There a is a new bakery, coffee shop or restaurant on every corner, and I meet people who have come from all parts of the world to start something new here. They bring great ideas with them.

Who inspired you?
My parents.

What advice would you give for someone who wants to open their own business?
Surround yourself with people that believe in you, but give honest advice. Have a written business plan, raise as much money as you can, treat people fairly, maintain good quality and never give up!

When in NY stop by Amai for a cup of tea and some tea sweets. Amai is on 3rd Av. between 16th and 17th St. in Manhattan. It's east of Union Square in the Gramercy neighborhood. Or, order some tea sweets at www.amainyc.com

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Try this...

Teavana means "heaven of tea". Teavana, a part Tea Bar and part Tea Emporium, opened their first teahouse in Atlanta, Georgia. Since then they have opened over 80 teahouses throughout the US and Mexico. They provide the freshest and highest quality tea. Experience the aromas, textures, and beneficial qualities of premium loose leaf teas with Teavana. www.teavana.com

Teavana Tea Gift Set

1 Perfect Teamaker, 12 oz. of Rock Cane Sugar, 4 small tins of Teavana tea: 2.5 oz. Rooibos Sweet Amore, 2.5 oz. MateVana, 2.5 oz. Rooibos Tropica, 2.5 oz. Earl Grey Creme, and 1 Teavana Perfect Teaspoon. All packaged in a Teavana copper gift box with decorative filler, including our Teavana brochure.

Teavana Easy Tea Steeper

The Teavana Perfect Teamaker creates the perfect cup of tea for tea lovers on the go. Just add loose tea, 18oz of hot water and steep. Drain the tea by placing it onto your favorite mug. Dishwasher/microwave safe. The interior filter can be removed for easy cleaning.

Matcha Green Tea

Traditionally used in the Japanese tea ceremony, this top quality green tea powder is hand-made from the youngest Gyokuro leaves. Matcha is said to be even healthier than other green teas since it is the only tea in which the whole leaf is used. In addition, only the finest, youngest leaves are hand-picked for Matcha. If you enjoy green tea, you should try this unique, powdered tea at least once. 1.1 oz of tea (30 grams).

Hazelnut Nutella Sandwich Cookies

The first time I made these hazelnut sandwich cookies was during the holidays for our extended family Christmas party. I used a fluted round cookie cutter and then made tiny cut-outs in the top cookie using very small cookie cutters in the shape of a Christmas tree, candy cane and star. The small cut-outs (less than 1 cm) gave just a glimpse of the shiny raspberry jam sandwiched between the cookies.

My original plan was to make the classic heart shaped cookies with a heart shaped cut-out and fill them with raspberry jam and give them a light dusting of powdered sugar. But when I dug out my set of heart shaped cookie cutters, I realized that I didn't have a heart shaped cookie cutter that would be small enough to make the cut-out for the top of the sandwich cookie. So I quickly switched gears and decided to keep both the bottom and tops uncut and fill the cookies with Nutella. That yummy chocolate hazelnut spread went perfectly with the hazelnuts in the cookie dough.

Photograph by Mary Kwong

Hazelnut Nutella Sandwich Cookies

Recipe by Mary, of **Alpine Berry**, adapted from *The Sweet Life* by Kate Zuckerman
Makes 5 dozen sandwich cookies

5 ounces hazelnuts
2 1/2 cups (312.5g) all purpose flour
1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp ground cinnamon
1/4 tsp baking powder
8 ounces (227g/16 tbsp) unsalted butter, softened at room temp
3/4 cup (169g) granulated sugar
1 large egg
1/2 cup Nutella (or any brand of chocolate hazelnut spread)

1. Combine hazelnuts, 1/2 cup flour and salt in the bowl of food processor. Pulse until nuts are ground to a fine powder. In a mixing bowl, combine the nut powder, remaining 2 cups of flour, cinnamon and baking powder. Set aside the dry ingredients.

2. In the bowl of stand mixer using the paddle attachment, cream the butter and sugar on medium-high speed until light and fluffy, about 6 to 8 minutes. Make sure to stop occasionally to scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the egg and mix until the batter looks smooth and glossy, about 1 to 2 minutes.

3. Add the dry ingredients all at once to the mixture. Drape a kitchen towel over the mixer and bowl to prevent the flour from spraying all over the place. Then, on low speed, mix until the dry ingredients are combined, about 1 to 2 minutes.

4. Scrape the dough onto a sheet of plastic food wrap and form a flat rectangle about 1-inch thick. Chill the dough in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or up to 3 days.

5. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (177 degrees C). Line your baking sheets with parchment paper or silicone sheets.

6. Roll the chilled dough out to 1/16-inch thick. Using a 1 1/2-inch cookie cutter, cut out cookies as close together on the dough as you can. Place the cut cookies 1 inch apart on your prepared baking sheets. Shape any remaining dough scrapes into a disk and refrigerate for 20 minutes before rolling it out again.

7. Chill the cut cookies in the refrigerator for 15 minutes before baking. (This 15 minute chill is optional but I like to give the cut cookies a brief rest to relax the gluten so that my cookies are tenderer).

8. Bake the cookies until golden brown, about 12 to 15 minutes. Allow cookies to cool completely before filling. Spread half the cookies with some Nutella and cover with remaining cookies to make a sandwich.

9. The sandwich cookies are best eaten the same day. You can bake the cookies and store them in an airtight container for up to 4 days. Fill them the day you plan to serve them.

nanaimo bars

Recipe and Photograph by Stephanie Whitten, of **A Whisk and a Spoon**

Did You Know?

In 1986, the city of Nanaimo held a contest to find the ultimate Nanaimo Bar recipe. The winner was Joyce Hardcastle and her recipe is now the official Nanaimo Bar of Nanaimo, whose city mascot just happens to be a giant Nanaimo Bar named Barney.

This looks good. What is it?" R asked."It's a Nanaimo bar," I replied. I may be from south of the border, but when I saw that the theme of this month's Weekend Cookbook Challenge is "red and white," I immediately thought of the Canadian flag. Perhaps this was because Canada Day had just passed, or perhaps because Sara from "I like to cook", (creator and host of WCC) lives in Canada…I don't know...but, I do know that I wanted to make Nanaimo bars, a British Columbian treat named after a city in Vancouver Island, for my entry. I love these simple bar cookies, with melt-in-your-mouth ganache and filling layers and a chocolaty graham cracker crust (a little goes a long way, though, as they are really sweet). So I opened a book with a red and white spine, The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion, and found the recipe I was looking for.

I have to admit that I thought this would be a pretty easy recipe to whip up. I didn't know that the "challenge" part of the equation would be finding graham crackers here in Sydney. I went to four different grocery stores, one 7-11 and one import shop, but no luck. I thought about replacing them with plain chocolate wafers, but couldn't find those either. Worn out from my search, I went home and made my own graham crackers from a recipe in the same book. (While they were quite good on their own, I don't think making graham crackers from scratch is necessary for these bars. Therefore, I'm not including those steps below. If like me, you cannot find them at the store, let me know, and I'll be happy to add the recipe.)

I don't remember when I first had a Nanaimo bar, but it could have been on any number of trips up north. My first time in Canada was with Grandma W, who took me to Vancouver for the 1986 World's Fair. Since then, I have traveled extensively through the country. Two weeks spent on Grand Manan Island with high school classmates sealed my love of the Maritime Provinces. The cute, smart, funny boy from Dundas, Ontario that I went out with for three years was reason enough to make the trip to the Toronto area several times. I have probably been to more national parks in Canada than in the US, and I think there is no place more beautiful than the Canadian Rockies in early spring. Where do I hope to go next? Maybe PEI or Quebec City. Although now that I really think about it, while I have been to Victoria, I have never been to Nanaimo…

Nanaimo Bars
Makes 48 small bars
Adapted from The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion

For the crust:
1 stick (4 oz) unsalted butter, melted
1/4 cup (1 3/4 oz) sugar
1/3 cup (1 oz) unsweetened cocoa powder
1 large egg
1 cup (3 oz) sweetened flaked coconut
1/2 cup (2 oz) chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups (10 oz) graham cracker crumbs

For the filling:
1 stick (4 oz) unsalted butter, softened
2 cups powdered sugar
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 Tablespoons instant vanilla pudding mix
2 Tablespoons whole milk

For the frosting:
1 cup (6 oz) chopped dark chocolate
2 Tablespoon (1 oz) unsalted butter

For the crust:
Preheat oven to 350°F/177°C. Grease a 9×9-inch or 11×7-inch pan and line the bottom with parchment.

Combine melted butter, sugar and cocoa in a bowl, then mix in the egg. Stir in the coconut, chopped nuts, vanilla and graham cracker crumbs.

Press into the botton of the prepared pan and bake for about 10 minutes. Cool crust completely before filling and frosting.

For the filling:
Cream the butter by hand in a medium bowl and add in 1 cup powdered sugar and the vanilla.

In a separate small bowl, stir the milk and pudding mix

together, then add to the butter mixture. Add in the remaining powdered sugar and beat vigorously until free of lumps. Spread over the cooled crust and refrigerate until cold (half an hour is good).

For the frosting:
Melt the chocolate and butter together using a double boiler or the microwave, stirring until smooth.

Spread and smooth over the chilled bars and refrigerate until set (another half hour or so). Cut with a sharp knife (heat your knife if you have trouble with the chocolate cracking).

If you're a lime lover, these ingredients should be in your pantry. These are extra-strong concentrates; a little goes a long way. www.kingathrurflour.com

BoyaJian Lime Oil is a remarkably intense essence squeezed from the rind of fresh limes; there's no oil added, just all-natural fruit flavor. 1/4 teaspoon is the approximate equivalent of 1 tablespoon grated rind. 1-ounce bottle

Lime Flavor Powder
Add intense lime flavor with this extra-strong all-natural powder. Ideal for use in your baked goods, sauces, or icings. 8-ounce bag.

Luscious Lime Cookies

Recipe and photographs by King Arthur Flour

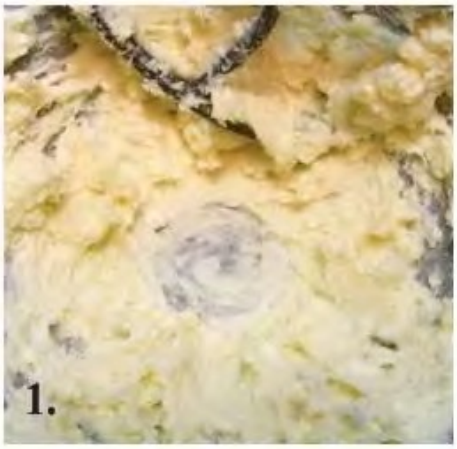
Lovely, luscious, sweet-sour, creamy-crunchy lime cookies are perfect for you, citrus lovers. Coat them in lime-scented sugar, as pictured, for the biggest lime flavor; for a milder, sweeter cookie, add white chocolate chips, or a slather of white chocolate icing. Yield: 25 cookies

Cookies
1/2 cup (4 ounces, 113g) softened butter
1/2 cup (2 ounces, 57g) confectioners' sugar or glazing sugar
1 1/2 to 2 teaspoons lime powder (depending on the degree of tartness you like)
1/2 teaspoon lime oil
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup (4 1/4 ounces, 120.5g) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour

Topping
3/4 cup (3 ounces, 85g) confectioners' sugar or glazing sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons lime powder

Directions

Preheat the oven to 325°F (163°C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.



1. Mix together the butter, sugar, lime powder, lime oil, and salt; there's no need to beat at high speed, just mix together. (Photo 1)

2. Mix in the flour. (Photo 2)

3. Scoop teaspoonfuls of dough onto the baking sheet, 1 1/2" apart. (Photo 3)

4. Bake the cookies for 17 to 18 minutes, until set and lightly brown around the edges. (Photo 4)

5. Remove from the oven, and let cool for 10 minutes.

6. Mix the topping ingredients, and put in a 1-gallon zip-top bag. (Photo 7)

7. Add 5 or 6 warm cookies at a time, and shake gently till they're coated. The sugar may get a bit sticky; that's OK. (Photo 8)

8. Transfer the cookies to a rack to cool, then coat the completely cooled cookies in the sugar again.

Makrout

Recipe and Photograph by Khadidja Zehani, of **SweetAlmond**

Makrout is an Algerian specialty and is the signature cookie for all Algerian celebrations. It is made out of semolina, butter and filled with either ground almonds or dates. It is shaped into diamonds, then fried and immersed in orange blossom flavored honey..... heavenly good!! These cookies are simple to make, however the key to have a good Makrout is to start with the right semolina: it has to be medium coarse.

Dough:
3 cups medium coarse semolina.
1 cup (227g) melted butter.
1/2 (4 oz) to 1 cup (8 oz) orange blosom water.
1/4 tsp salt.

Filling:
1 1/2 cups ground blanched almonds.
1/2 cup granulated sugar.
Orange blossom water.

Vegetable oil for frying.
Honey and orange blossom water.

1. Mix the semolina, the salt and the butter. Rub the mixture well then add the orange blossom water until you form a dough. Don't make the dough too soft otherwise you'll have difficulties when shaping the cookies. Cover the dough with plastic wrap and let it rest for 1/2 hour to an hour.

2. Meanwhile, make the filling: mix the almonds and the sugar then gradually add the orange blossom water until you form a firm paste. Set aside.

3. To make the cookies, take a portion of the dough, shape it into a rectangle and in the middle put a log of the filling. Close it into a log. Cut into diamonds and set aside.

4. Heat the oil to a medium heat, 350°F (177° C). Fry the cookies until golden brown. Drain on a paper towel.

5. Heat the honey with a little bit of orange blossom water and immerse the cookies in it. Let drain the excess honey.

6. Every time you want to serve these cookies, repeat immersing them in honey.

Legal Cookies

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I hate when the sugar police come knocking at my door. I came up with these cookies to keep them away. They're a variation of the thumbprint cookies many of us made with Mom as kids. They're legal because we've replaced the sugar with Grade B organic maple syrup and spices. These cookies provide just enough sweet to satisfy.

1 cup organic raw almonds (whole or slivered)
1 cup (90g) rolled oats
1 cup (125g) organic, unbleached all-purpose or spelt flour
1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon grated fresh ginger, or 1/8 teaspoon powdered ginger
1/8 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/8 teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
1/4 teaspoon sea salt
1/2 cup (236ml) safflower oil
1/2 cup (170g) maple syrup
1/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
Jam, for filling

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177° C). Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

2. In a food processor fitted with a metal blade, grind the almonds into coarse flour, about 2 minutes. Add the oats, flour, cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, nutmeg, and salt and process for another minute.

3. Add the oil, maple syrup, and vanilla extract. Continue to process until well combined. The dough will quickly form into a ball. Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let rest at room temperature for 15 minutes.

4. Form 1 tablespoon of dough into a ball, place on the prepared baking sheet, and make a thumb imprint in the center of each cookie. Fill with your favorite organic jam or other filling (see sidebar). Place the cookies on the baking sheet about 1 inch apart. Bake for about 15 minutes; the cookies are done when the bottoms are browned.

Makes 24 cookies

Per Serving Calories: 132; Total Fat: 8 g (0 g saturated, 6 g monounsaturated); Carbohydrates: 14 g; Protein: 2 g; Fiber: 1 g; Sodium: 26 mg

Inner Cook Notes:

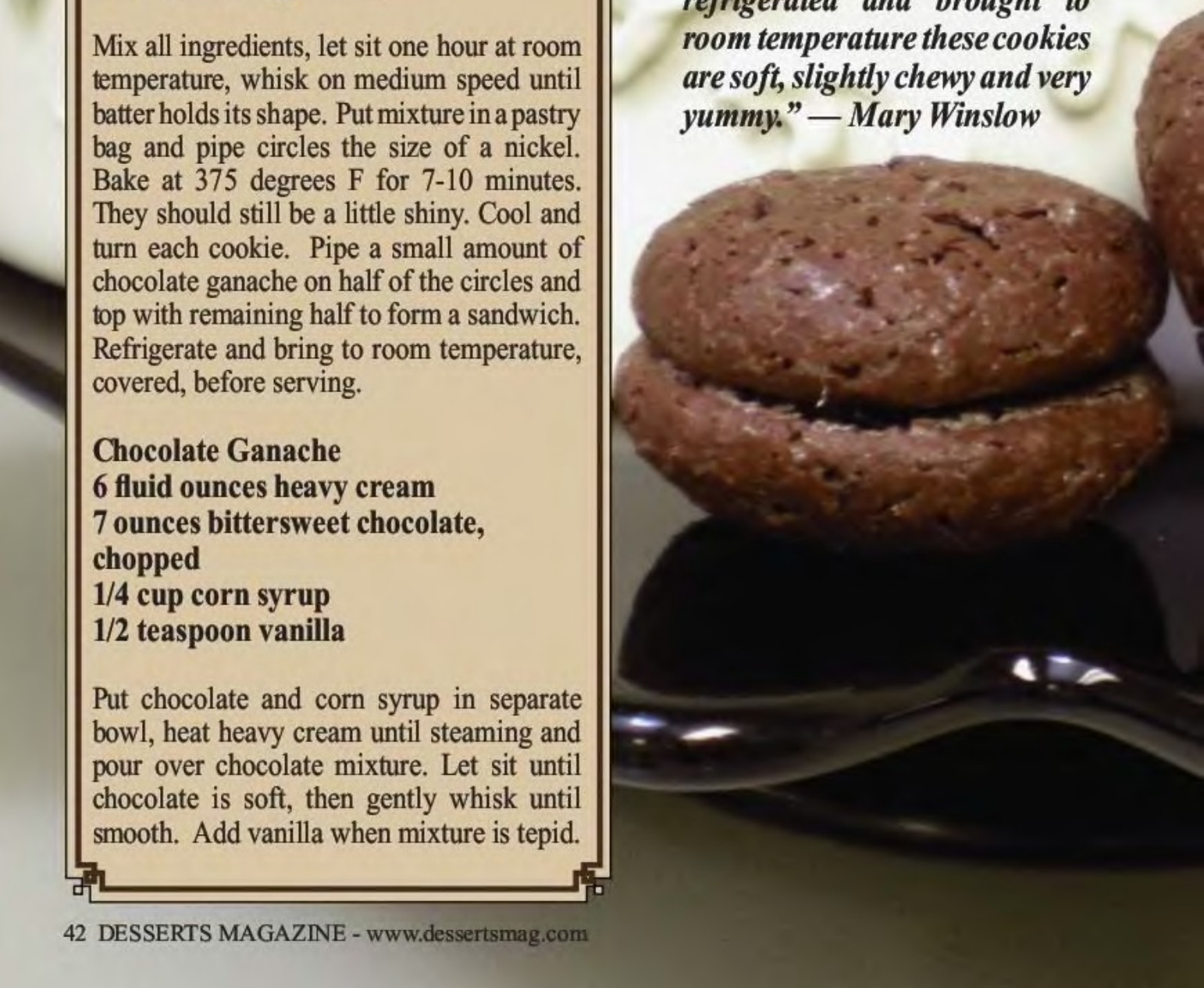
The choices of fillings are unlimited. Try organic almond or peanut butter (high in nutrients) topped with a few organic chocolate chips (omit the cinnamon, ginger, cardamom, and nutmeg for a more traditional cookie). Bake the cookies with chocolate chips and then sprinkle with toasted coconut when removed from the oven, or bake the cookies topped with raspberry jam and chocolate chips. You can also add 1/4 cup currants or chopped raisins when you add the liquid. These cookies can be frozen in airtight containers for up to 1 month. Bring them to room temperature and warm for a few minutes in a 200°F oven.

Sometimes the toughest thing for someone recovering from cancer is ensuring their family eat well. The problem is compounded when little ones are involved. One woman recovering from colon cancer found this recipe to be family friendly. "My husband and I enjoy them, and we don't feel guilty eating them." She says her four-year-old helps, using her thumb to indent the cookie dough so they can be filled with peanut butter.

Chocolate Hazelnut Macaroons

Recipe and Photograph by Mary Winslow

"These cookies are more chewy, if not refrigerated. When refrigerated and brought to room temperature these cookies are soft, slightly chewy and very yummy." — Mary Winslow



Chocolate Hazelnut Macaroons

by Mary Winslow, of **Chocolate Gourmet**

Yields: 55 sandwiches

Macaroons

7 ounces of hazelnuts (toasted and ground)
14 ounces of granulated sugar
1 3/4 ounces of dutch processed cocoa
5 1/4 ounces egg whites

Mix all ingredients, let sit one hour at room temperature, whisk on medium speed until batter holds its shape. Put mixture in a pastry bag and pipe circles the size of a nickel. Bake at 375 degrees F for 7-10 minutes. They should still be a little shiny. Cool and turn each cookie. Pipe a small amount of chocolate ganache on half of the circles and top with remaining half to form a sandwich. Refrigerate and bring to room temperature, covered, before serving.

Chocolate Ganache

6 fluid ounces heavy cream
7 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
1/4 cup corn syrup
1/2 teaspoon vanilla

Put chocolate and corn syrup in separate bowl, heat heavy cream until steaming and pour over chocolate mixture. Let sit until chocolate is soft, then gently whisk until smooth. Add vanilla when mixture is tepid.

Up Close and Personal with Mary Winslow...

Best baking advice you've ever received: Keep trying and don't be afraid to fail. Just throw it away, lick the bowl, wash it, of course, and try again.

Alternative dream job: Fashion designer. I often use patterns I see in fashion magazines as an inspiration for cake designs.

Weirdest thing you've ever eaten: Chocolate covered ant I purchased at the museum store with my kids.

Favorite dessert(s): A great chocolate brownie.

What do you do when you are not baking? Sleep. Just kidding, sort of. I actually try to spend as much time with my family as I can.

Favorite cookbook(s): Rose Levy Beranbaum's The Cake Bible - it's so precise. It was my best teacher.
I also love all those small cookbooks you find when checking out at the grocery store. Blue Ribbon Winners, etc.....

Where do you look for inspiration? For my wedding cakes - the style of the wedding, classic vs contemporary. The colors being used, and patterns that can work well with cake design - be it the bride's dress, their china, or invitation.
For cookies and truffles - I try to put together flavors that are simply yummy. If they are unique, great - but it's not my goal.

Favorite restaurant(s): Blackbird, Francesca's on Taylor, Follia

Chocolate Chip Cookies - thin and crispy or thick and chewy: Both, crisp around the edges but chewy in the center.

Favorite kind of cookie(s): It's a hard choice. I always go for the controlling coconut, overprotective pecan and the new precocious peanut butter.

Favorite kitchen tool(s): The torch. Whether it's used to warm my mixing bowl, release a cheesecake, or caramelize sugar.

Best baking tip(s) or trick(s)? Be exact. Use weight wherever possible. When measuring leavening agents like baking soda or powder, make sure to loosen before measuring with spoon.

What's next for Chocolate Gourmet? This year we added a new flavor to each of our product categories. As time progresses, I'd like to offer seasonal flavors and possibly a new line all together. And depending on how things go, possibly a retail location.

For more information visit www.chocolategourmet.com

Flaky Black Sesame Cookie

Recipe and Photographs by Amy Chen

I wanted to make a Chinese cookie. The problem is that there aren't many classic Chinese cookies and, no, fortune cookies do not count. The lack of home baking is because most Chinese households don't even have an oven and baking is primarily done in bakeries in the form of little bread buns and pastries, rarely, if ever, cookies.

For the purposes of this cookie event, these Thousand Layer Cookie will be our Chinese cookie of the day because 1. Steven's mom bought these at our local Asian supermarket (99 Ranch) and 2. There are Chinese characters on the packaging (which I think say qian ceng bing aka Chinese for Thousand Layer Cookie), which makes these Chinese cookies (good reasoning, right?). So when you open up the wrapper, inside is a cookie about 2 inches long, 1 inch wide, and roughly 3/8 inch thick. There are a few sugar crystals on top of the cookie to give it an extra crunch. Break it in half and you see that though it is not 1000 layers, it is indeed very flaky, with a few black sesame seeds.

The main difference between Chinese baking and Western baking is that the Chinese use lard instead of butter (we like our pork and pork products). As a result of using lard, the baked goods are flakier and more tender but lack the characteristic flavor of butter. My goal was to recreate this cookie at home because they're really, really good and addicting. The ingredients seemed pretty straight forward: 1. use a combination of butter and shortening to approximate lard, 2. add in some whole wheat flour (because the back of the wrapper had a picture of wheat, again more good reasoning, right?), 3. some black sesame seeds, 4. and finally some raw sugar on top for crunch. The hardest part of this recipe was creating the flaky texture.

My first attempt was to use the Chinese pastry technique. An oil dough (shortening, butter, and flour) is sealed inside a water dough (flour, oil, water, sugar) and rolled out and folded repeatedly, much like puff pastry. However, I've never made puff pastry or Chinese pastry before so this led to the disastrous result of One Layer Cookie (bleh). So I tried a second technique, which was to adapt a basic pie dough recipe to create the flaky layers. The layers will not be as uniform and distinct as a cookie made with the Chinese flaky pastry technique but this is much easier to do at home and with a food processor, the dough takes a minute to put together.

Flaky Black Sesame Cookie

Recipe by Amy, of **Nook & Pantry**

3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup white whole wheat flour (if you don't have it all-purpose flour is fine)
4 Tablespoons cold shortening
4 Tablespoons cold butter
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 Tablespoon black sesame seeds
3 - 5 Tablespoons ice cold water
1 - 2 Tablespoons raw sugar

1. Mix the two flours, sugar, salt, and black sesame seeds until everything is evenly combined. Cut the shortening and butter into cubes and scatter them in flour. Make sure your shortening and butter are very cold. Use a food processor and pulse the butter with the flour until the mixture looks crumbly and the butter pieces are no bigger than a pea. Alternatively use a pastry cutter or two forks and cut the butter into the flour.

2. Start with 3 tablespoons of water and scatter it over the mixture. Pulse in the food processor slightly until the dough comes together. If it still looks dry add a little bit more water (I used a little over 4 tablespoons). If you're doing this by hand, scatter the water over the mixture and fold with a spatula and press the crumbs together until the dough starts to come together.

3. Form the dough into a flat disc, wrap with plastic wrap, and chill in the fridge for at least an hour or in the freezer for 15 minutes.

4. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Flour your work surface and roll out the dough into a rectangle until it is about 1/4 inch to 3/8 inch thick. Scatter raw sugar on top of the dough and gently press in. Cut into 1 inch by 2 inch portions and place them on a baking sheet. Bake until the cookies are golden, about 25 to 30 minutes.

And the results? As you can see, my cookie does not have as many handsome layers as the original. Texture wise, it is a little more crunchy and fragrant than the packaged cookie because I used a little butter in combo with the shortening. This recipe is a great start and the cookies have excellent flavor. The black sesame seeds adds a delicious nuttiness and the raw sugar adds a great crunch to this unique cookie.

Yuzu Sesame Rugelach

Recipe and Photograph by Amy Chen

The other day I found some bricks of cream cheese way in the back of the fridge that were pretty darn close to the expiration date. Naturally, the first thing that came to mind was cheesecake. Steven isn't the biggest fan of cheesecake, so I made two mini cheesecakes instead of a full recipe. That took care of 2 bars, but there was still one left. I racked my brain trying to think of what else I could do with the cream cheese and the second thing I came up with was the cream cheese based dough of rugelach.

The first time I make something, I try to stick to the most traditional recipe as possible. For rugelach, that meant a combination of apricot jam, walnuts, chocolate, raisins/currants, and poppy seeds. But it didn't work out quite like I planned because I didn't have the apricot filling. I grabbed a jar of yuzu marmalade because it was the only jam in the house, and the color is pretty close, right?

Then I thought, I'll just Asianify the whole thing! Instead of cinnamon I used fresh ginger and instead of poppy seeds I used sesame seeds. Citrus and chocolate go pretty well together, so I added some chopped chocolate, which ended up being the only traditional ingredient. I decided against all of the nuts and dried fruit because nothing else seemed to match the yuzu and sesame. What I ended up with was the combination of yuzu, ginger, sesame, and chocolate wrapped up in a flaky cream cheese dough. Sounds unusual but it turned out surprisingly delicious!

Dough

1 1/2 (187.5g) cups all purpose flour
1 Tablespoon sugar
1/8 teaspoon salt
1 stick butter (1/2 cup or 4 oz.), cold cut into 1/2 in pieces
4 oz. (half a bar) cream cheese, cold, cut into 1/2 in pieces
1/4 cup sour cream

Filling

2/3 cup yuzu/citron marmalade
1/2 teaspoon freshly grated ginger
1 Tablespoon white sesame seeds
1 Tablespoon black sesame seeds
1/2 cup finely chopped chocolate

Glaze

1 egg beaten
2 - 3 Tbsp raw sugar

For the Dough:

1. In the bowl of a food processor, add the flour, sugar, and salt and pulse to mix. Scatter the butter and cream cheese pieces and pulse a few times to cut it into the flour, stop about halfway to add the sour cream. The pieces of butter and cream cheese should still be relatively large before you add the sour cream. Scatter spoonfuls of the sour cream over the mixture and continue to pulse until the mixture starts to form large curds. Don't over work the dough otherwise you won't get the flaky layers.

2. Turn the dough onto a work surface and press the pieces together. Divide the dough into two pieces, flatten it into a disc, wrap in plastic wrap, and chill for at least 2 hours.

For the Filling:

1. Heat yuzu jam in a small saucepan or in the microwave until it is warm and mix the freshly grated ginger. Set Aside.

2. Add both the white and black sesame seeds into a small skillet and toast over medium heat until the white ones look golden brown, about 3 minutes.

3. In bowl, mix the toasted sesame seeds and chocolate. Set aside.

To Assemble:

1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Bring out a disc of the dough and roll it out into a 11 - 12 inch circle. Spread half of the jam over the dough and then scatter half of the dried filling ingredients. Cut the dough into 12 wedges, first cutting the dough into quarters, then each quarter into 3 equal pieces. Roll each wedge, starting at the base of the triangle, the point of the wedge should be on the exterior of the dough.

2. Refrigerate for 30 minutes or freeze for 15 minutes before baking.

3. Before baking, brush the tops of the cookies with beaten egg and sprinkle some raw sugar on top. Bake only one tray at a time. Bake in a 350 degrees F oven for 22 - 25 minutes. The cookies should be golden.

Visit Amy at http://nookandpantry.blogspot.com/

Get this...

"These teapots will sure make a great conversation piece on your next tea party...."

This petite glass teapot is called "Sur la Mer" which means "By the Sea" features translucentoceanblue accentson thehandle and lid. It is composed of Borosilicate glass, which tends to be stronger and more heat resistant than conventional glassware, yet appears delicate (although durable) with an air of sophistication. The glass pot allows light to travel the glass providing a translucent feel while illuminating the tea liqueur. The addition of a removable spring strainer in the spout allows the tea leaves to unfold, ebb and flow freely within the pot. 12oz. Only at www.teavana.com.

Rose of Suzhou White Tea

This artisan display tea is comprised of jasmine flowers, marigold blossomsand aglobeamaranthflower hand tied with Suzhou (the Venice of China) white tea. Considered the tea of love, it will blossom as it steeps. Great for tea parties or as a special gift for the tea lover in your life.

These cast iron warming stands use a small tealight candle to keep your teapot warm during a tea party or just during the day. They are a great way to enjoy a warm pot of tea for much longer than just sitting the teapot on a trivet. And they give you a more attractive way to present your teapot: raised on a cast iron stand. This black cast iron teapot warming stand will last a lifetime with proper care. The small is almost 2.5 inches tall and 4 inches square. The large is 2.5 inches tall and 4.75 inches square. The large is for large (30 ounce and up) teapots.

This teapot is truly imperial in the sense that four dragons are asymmetrically carved on both sides of the teapot. Symbolizing good fortune, power and strength, you will find that these dragons are protecting the sacred pearl thought to be a symbolic representation of wisdom or yang energy. Pearl symbolism, like lunar symbolism, arises from Daoist roots and the connections are extremely complex. This pearl can be said to stand most often for 'truth' and 'life' - perhaps even everlasting life which is made available to those who perceive the truth and attain enlightenment. Holds 9 ounces. www.teavana.com

Nine Dragon Stone Teapot

This hand-carved teapot is in a class of its own. The Dragon's pearl, thought to be the Chinese symbol for universal Qi, the progenitor of all energy and creation, is the teapot lid held and protected by three dragons facing upward. Two other dragons extend to the spout and handle. The teapot also has two dragons carved on each side, protecting their own dragon pearl. Representing good fortune, power and strength, this gorgeous teapot is hand-carved from soapstone and makes great tea. Worthy of being displayed in a museum! Holds 16 ounces. www.teavana.com

This 10 oz. swan teapot is the epitome of elegance. The graceful neck of the swan curves into a handle and its feathers form the lid. A hole in the feathered tail lets out the steam for the tea as it steeps. Comes with two adorable baby swans reflected in two 1 oz. cups with handles. Symbolizes elegance, beauty and grace. www.teavana.com

How to choose the right teapot...

There are a wide array of teapots as well as different styles and designs. Start by buying the right size of teapot. If you steep a cup for yourself each morning, choose a teapot that is 14 ounces or smaller. These are easy to use and make one to two cups.

You might also want a larger teapot that is over 20 ounces, if you serve tea to company, a larger teapot can make numerous small cups of tea to serve a crowd. A larger teapot is also perfect if you like to drink tea all day long and don't want to resteep. Lastly, the only other reason you should consider a larger teapot is if you are planning to simply use it as decor in your home; oftentimes a larger pot makes more of a statement.

Otherwise, a 20 ounce teapot or smaller will handle a guest or two and yet be perfect for your morning or afternoon pot of tea. Once you decide on the size, you can choose on the correct type of teapot for your needs.

There are specialized teapots or general teapots that will do it all. Here are the main types of teapot:

Cast Iron Teapots

These make the best pot of tea and will keep the tea warm the longest than most teapots. Cast iron does an excellent job of distributing the heat evenly throughout the teapot, therefore it extracts the most flavor and nutrients from the tea leaves. However, the best cast iron pots are handmade in Japan, which makes them more expensive than most other options.

Yixing Teapots

These are truly specialized. Yixing pots are made from a clay in the Jiangsu province of China that absorbs the flavors of your favorite tea. Because of this, they should only be used on one type of tea. Often people purchase a Yixing pot to make a favorite tea on a regular basis, not necessarily for serving tea. So Yixing teapots are typically smaller, 8 - 12 ounces. Over time, Yixing pots will enhance the flavors of your tea, making an even better cup.

Glass Teapots

Glass teapots allow you to see the tea as it steeps; some tea leaves unfurl or pop and some artisan teas even bloom. It makes an unique experience in enjoying tea. However, glass teapots won't hold heat as well, so a teapot warmer is recommended. And they are obviously more fragile than a cast iron or even Yixing teapot. If you enjoy artisan or "blooming" teas in particular, a glass teapot is a necessity in your collection.

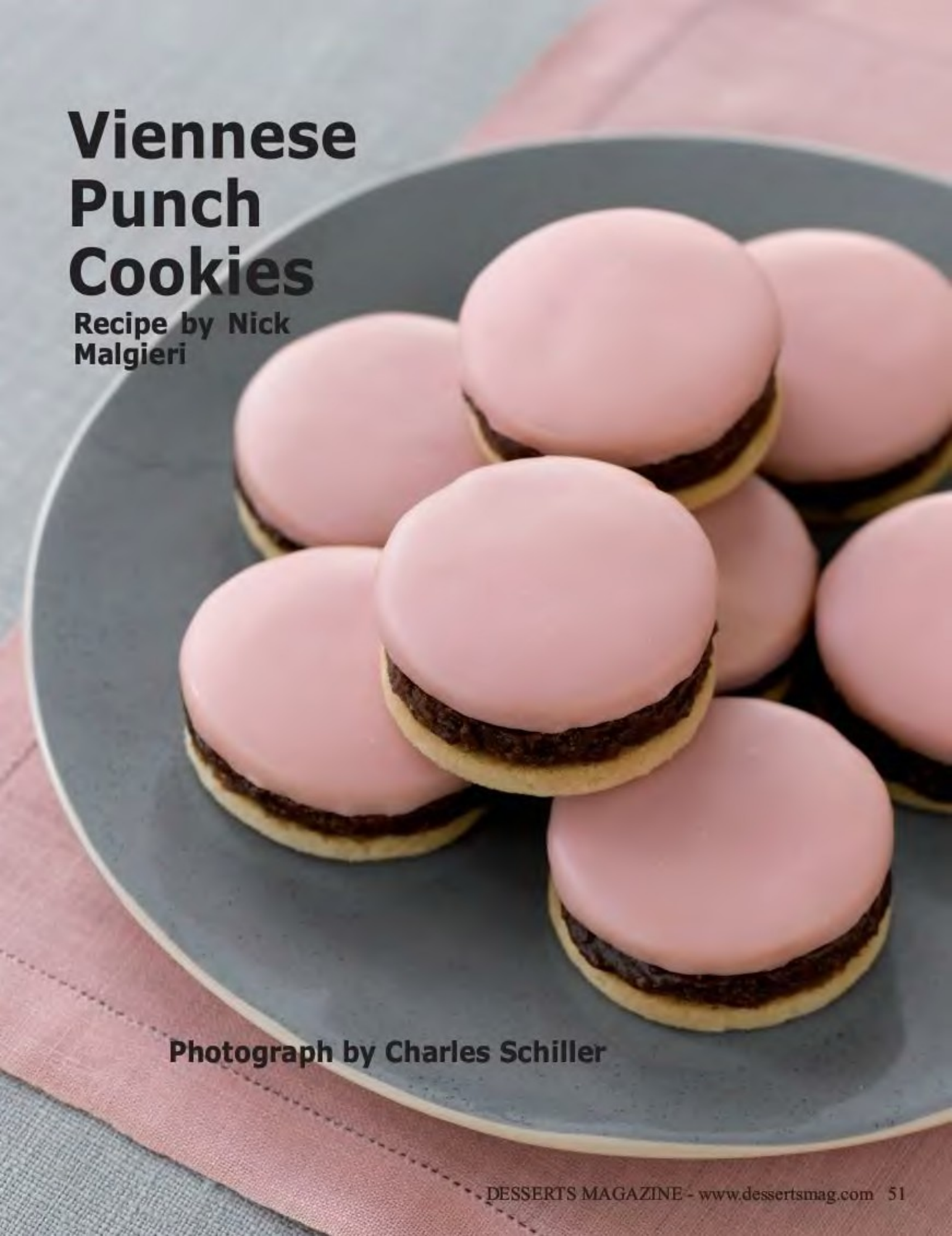
Ceramic Teapots

Ceramic allows for more color and detail than some of the other options, so ceramic teapots are exceptionally pretty. Because of this, they can easily go from decoration to functional teapot. They are also priced more affordably, so they provide a great way to start making or serving tea. There is also a very wide variety of ceramic teapots to choose from.

Once you've chosen the size and type of teapot you want, what is left is choosing a teapot that reflects your taste and personality.

Viennese Punch Cookies

Recipe by Nick Malgieri



Photograph by Charles Schiller

In Vienna, a Punschtorte (punch cake) is an elaborate affair of dense sponge cake filled with something akin to a rum ball mixture—cake crumbs soaked in rum and flavored with a bit of chocolate, some apricot preserves, and some grated lemon and orange zests. Then it's covered with apricot preserves, a layer of marzipan, and a pink sugar icing. It's quite sweet but also very delicate. To make this cookie version of the famous cake, I decided to bake the cookie scraps, then grind them up in the food processor, adding the rum, preserves, chocolate, and citrus zests. These are definitely an adult cookie because of the quantity of rum they contain. You can always omit the rum if you wish—just substitute more apricot preserves.

Viennese Punch Cookies

Makes about 24 sandwich cookies

Viennese Cookie Dough

16 tablespoons (2 sticks) unsalted butter, softened
1 cup confectioners' sugar
1 cup (about 4 ounces/100 grams) slivered almonds, finely ground in the food processor
2 cups all-purpose flour (spoon flour into a dry-measure cup and level off)

Filling

Baked cookie dough scraps
1/3 cup apricot preserves, strained
2 ounces (50 grams) semisweet chocolate, melted and cooled
2 tablespoons dark rum
2 teaspoons finely grated orange zest
2 teaspoons finely grated lemon zest

Rum Icing

2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted after measuring
2 tablespoons dark rum
2 teaspoons water
1 drop liquid red food coloring

2 cookie sheets or jelly-roll pans lined with parchment or foil

1. Set racks in the upper and lower thirds of the oven and preheat to 350°F (180°C).
2. For the dough, beat the butter and confectioners' sugar in an electric mixer fitted with the paddle on medium speed until soft and light, 2 to 3 minutes. Beat in the ground almonds.
3. Remove the bowl from the mixer and stir in the flour with a large rubber spatula, mixing until the dough is smooth. Scrape the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and divide it into 3 equal parts.
4. Flour the surface and the dough and gently roll it to about 3/8 inch (1 cm) thick. Use a plain cutter to cut out 2- to 21/2-inch (5- to 6-inch) cookies and place them on the prepared pans 1 inch (21/2 cm) apart on all sides. Reserve the scraps from cutting the cookies in a bowl. Roll and cut the remaining 2 pieces of dough, reserving the scraps from the rolling and cutting with the others.
5. Bake the cookies until they are firm and dull looking, 15 to 20 minutes. After the first 7 to 8 minutes, place the pan from the lower rack on the upper one and vice versa, turning the pans back to front at the same time. If you know that your oven gives strong bottom heat, stack the pan on the lower rack on top of a second one for insulation. Slide the parchment papers off the pans to cool the cookies.
6. While the cookies are baking, arrange the scraps in a single layer on a parchment- or foil-lined pan. Bake as for the cookies and cool on a rack.
7. To make the filling, break up the cooled scraps and place them in the bowl of a food

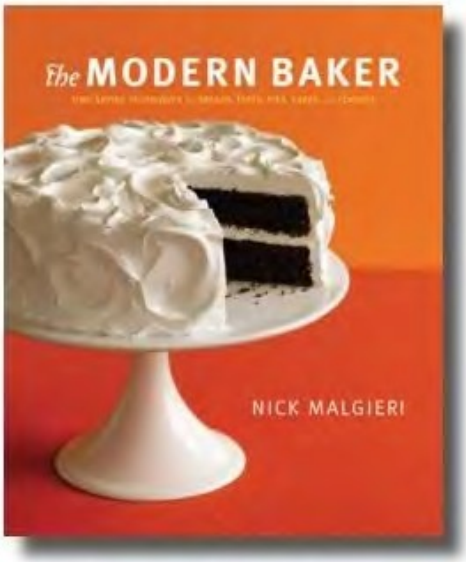
processor fitted with the metal blade. Pulse to grind coarsely. Add the preserves, melted chocolate, rum, and orange and lemon zests and pulse until the filling holds a soft shape.

8. To fill the cookies, turn half the bases over so that the flattest sides are facing upward. Spread a little less than 1 tablespoon of the filling on the cookie base to within 1/8 inch (3 mm) of the edge. Top with the other cookies, gently pressing them together.

9. For the icing, combine the confectioners' sugar, rum, water, and food coloring in a medium saucepan. Stir until smooth. Place over low heat and cook the icing until it is just lukewarm, about 110°F (45°C). Use a small offset spatula to spread a thin coating of the icing on top of each cookie.

STORAGE: Keep the cookies in a cool place between sheets of wax paper in a tin or plastic container with a tight-fitting lid.

The Modern Baker: Time-Saving Techniques for Breads, Tarts, Pies, Cakes and Cookies by Nick Malgieri



"It's always exciting to have a new book from Nick, a baking hall-of-famer, but to have so many new recipes with so many new time-saving techniques for making them, is cause for celebration. This is a great teaching book from a great teacher." – Dorie Greenspan, author of Baking From My Home to Yours

Nick Malgieri latest book is a collection of 150 simple step-by-step recipes that have gourmet appeal. The Modern Baker strives to bring you baking success with the bulk of the preparation taking under one hour. Nick Malgieri distills years of teaching and experience into these detailed recipes for virtually every savory or sweet yeast bread, quick bread, muffin, pastry, dough, and batter. Recipes are thorough and include descriptions of how batters and doughs are supposed to appear at each stage of preparation. Nick leads cooks through the simple art of creating an international assortment of delicious sweet and savory baked goods, interweaving techniques and helpful sidebars. You will find out how he came up with a time-saving method that takes all the work out of making croissants. Step-by-step photos clearly illustrate techniques such as rolling pita bread or decorating cakes. Big beautiful photos showcasing a taste-tempting selection of treats will make it difficult to decide which to bake next! The Modern Baker is as necessary and essential as a good oven.

Nick Malgieri, former Executive Pastry Chef at Windows on the World, is a 1996 inductee into Who's Who of Food and Beverage in America. The bestselling author of 8 cookbooks, Malgieri currently directs the baking program at the Institute of Culinary Education and frequently serves as a guest teacher at many cooking schools. Since 1985, he has appeared at culinary events throughout North America. Malgieri has appeared on all the national morning shows and local U.S. television.

Pumpkin Saffron Macarons

Recipe and Photographs by Helen Dujardin

All summer long upon entering the grocery store I would grab a basket, stop at the sushi counter, pass by the salad bar, turn the corner and with my eyes closed reach in the plum and nectarine display to my left. The most visible display as you enter the store. All summer long, I would pick three of each and make a beeline for the cherries and the figs before resuming with the rest of the items on my list. Summer reached an end. Pears replaced cherries and figs turned into dates. Expected.

I still went to the store and turned the same corners, walked down the same aisles even when Autumn pointed its lovely little chilly mornings (well, for about 3 days). Last week, as I walked by the main display and reached for the plums and nectarines, I found myself holding three decorative mini gourds instead. "C'est quoi cette histoire?" What is going on? Well, I really said "quesaco", Provencal for the same expression which attracted a different set of puzzled looks. After the courgettes and aubergines, the kid working at the produce section thought I was asking about a specific gourd and was already running to the back room. I feel that if I am still around at 80-90 years old, I will become that "odd lady", the ghost of the grocery store. Seriously... let's hope I am not that "creepy odd lady".

With the summer produce moving to the back of the store, it was time I gave those little pumpkins a whirl and let Fall sit at the kitchen table while I bake and write. There are days it is difficult to wax poetic about a cherry dessert for the book when the aromas of mulled wine and apple cider are coming from next door. We still do not have anything that resembles Fall here but we like to practice. We gather wood, we make pretty piles, we shop for scarves and try to knit. We get in the spirit even if we can't wear our coats. We get excited with the first whisper of Northern

wind.

I am doing just that. I bought a few mini pumpkins and gourds and turned them into votives, set them on the dining room table to set the mood. I cooked the flesh down and was left with about half a cup, which was a little too little for pumpkin pie. I thought about mixing it with some cream cheese to make a couple of small cheesecakes. While rummaging through the fridge, I spotted a container of egg whites, and the package of saffron, next to the almonds. The fridge was making the recipe up for me, signs of macarons everywhere!! I needed a little snack to take next door to our weekly neighbors' gathering and I was not sure how the concoction forming in my head would be received. I settled on lightly infused saffron shells with a simple cream cheese and pumpkin filling with just a touch of cloves.

In the past year, a lot of people have started to make macarons on a more regular basis and the first remark I read for first timers is how surprisingly very sweet they are. Ah, yes...I guess we forgot to tell you... they are! That's why they are small, sold individually or in small box and are best shared with a group of friends. Back home, we eat one with coffee or tea, not like a handfull animal crackers in the middle of the afternoon, not that there is anything wrong with that. Hence, I like to use a slightly less sweet filling and cream cheese is fantastic in that regard and works great with all sorts of flavors.

The second most frequently asked question is what is the best way to pipe even shells all the time. When you do macarons regularly, it becomes difficult not to. Your hands repeat the motions. Over the years, your wrists have registered the nuances and your hands repeat the motion. I always write back the same thing "Hold your tip at a 45 degree angle. Press the filling through your pastry bag from the top down . Practice, practice,

practice". Some people are ingenious and smart thinkers and tediously trace circles on parchment paper, invert the sheet, pipe and bake. That takes time and patience. Maybe it is a reason why people make macarons once and never again? On top of the required nut grinding, meringue folding just so... there is piping even circles so they can be paired up aesthetically and not look like distant cousins.

Pumpkin Saffron Macarons

Recipe by Helen Dujardin, of **Tartelette**
Makes 12-18 macarons, depending size

Note: I did whip the egg whites with the saffron together without a problem, but if you fear that your whites might not foam up properly because the saffron has taken on moisture or oiliness, ground the almonds with the saffron instead and proceed with the recipe as written.

Saffron shells:
3 egg whites (about 90 gr)
1/2 tsp saffron
40 gr granulated sugar
200 gr powdered sugar
110 gr almonds

1. For the whites: the day before (24hrs), separate your eggs and store the whites at room temperature in a covered container. If you want to use 48hrs (or more) egg whites, you can store them in the fridge.
2. In a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment, whip the egg whites to a foam with the saffron, gradually add the sugar until you obtain a glossy meringue. Do not overbeat your meringue or it will be too dry and your macarons won't work.
3. Combine the almonds and powdered sugar in a food processor and give them a good pulse until the nuts are finely ground. Pass through a sieve.
4. Add them to the meringue, give it a quick fold to break some of the air and then fold the mass carefully until you obtain a batter that flows like magma or a thick ribbon. Give quick strokes at first to break the mass and slow down.
5. The whole process should not take more than 50 strokes. Test a small amount on a plate: if the tops flattens on its own you are good to go. If there is a small beak, give the batter a couple of turns.
6. Fill a pastry bag fitted with a plain tip (Ateco #807 or #809) with the batter and pipe small rounds (1.5 inches in diameter) onto parchment paper lined baking sheets.
7. Preheat the oven to 300 degrees F (149 degrees C). Let the macarons sit out for 30 minutes to an hour to harden their shells a bit and bake for 8-10 minutes, depending on their size. Let cool.
8. If you have trouble removing the shells, pour a couple of drops of water under the parchment paper while the sheet is still a bit warm and the macarons will lift up more easily do to the moisture. Don't let them sit there in it too long or they will become soggy. Once baked and if you are not using them right away, store them in an airtight container out of the fridge for a couple of days or in the freezer.

Cream Cheese Pumpkin Filling:
2 oz (60gr) cream cheese, at room temperature
2 oz (60gr) freshly cooked or canned pumpkin
1/8 tsp ground cloves

1. In a medium bowl, mix the cream cheese, pumpkin and cloves until completely incorporated.
2. Fill a pastry bag with this mixture and pipe onto half the shells and top with another shell.

"Crispy and chewy with a creamy cream cheese pumpkin filling—simply divine..."

CARAMEL FLEUR DE SEL MACARONS

Recipe and Photographs by Gemmi Rizzi

Fleur de Sel Caramel
Recipe by Gemmi, of **Bake with Heart, Cook with Love**

50g granulated sugar
100g heavy cream
1/4 teaspoon fleur de sel
20g unsalted butter, at room temperature

1. Place the sugar in a saucepan and heat on medium until the sugar turn to a golden brown color (Photo 1).

2. In the meantime, place the cream and salt in a microwave-safe container for 1 to 2 minutes, stir with a spoon to dissolve all the salt.

3. Once the sugar turn to a golden brown color pour the hot cream slowly in the caramel (Photo 2). Reduce the heat to low to boil the caramel (Photo 3). Add the butter (Photo 4), turn the heat to low for 2 to 3 minutes. Turn off the heat and leave the caramel to cool completely at room temperature.

Macaron

50g egg whites
15g caster sugar
65g ground almond
100g confectioners' sugar
10g chocolate chip, finely chopped

1. Sift confectioners' sugar and finely ground almond (Photo 1) together. Add the finely chopped chocolate and mix until combined.

2. In the bowl of an electric stand mixer with the whip attachment. Mix the egg white just foamy then add the caster sugar a little at a time on medium speed. On high speed, mix until it reach a firm peak (Photo 2). Turn off the mixer. With an spatula, fold in the dry ingredients until it is smooth like cake batter.

3. Pipe the macaron onto a baking sheet (Photo 3) and leave the piped macarons for 30-60 minutes to form a skin , you can check if it's ready to bake by using your finger to touch the surface of macaron , if nothing sticks on your finger, then the macarons are ready to bake.

4. Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C for about 10-12 minutes. If using the parchment paper, as soon as you remove from the oven, run a little water between the baking sheet and the parchment paper. This will make it easy to remove macaron from the paper. Let the macarons cool completely before filling.

5. Fill a pastry bag with the fleur de sel caramel and pipe onto the bottom of a macaron and top with another macaron.

"Gooye, crispy, sweet,
salty...just heavenly!"

Vanilla Kipferl

It's the mellow aroma of vanilla that makes us love these cookies. That and the wonderful flaky texture of the cookies when you sink your teeth into one. The way it crumbles onto the tongue, opening up the vanilla and almond aromas is always pure joy.

© Meeta Khurana, All rights reserved

Recipe and Photograph by Meeta Khurana

It's cookie baking season at our home and we have been enjoying spending hours huddled in the kitchen in a cloud of flour, vanilla, cinnamon, icing sugar and everything nice. Typical winter - the rain beats relentlessly against the windows and the wind howls through the tiny gaps. But this is not getting us down.

We are in high spirits. It's cosy, warm and inviting here. We're wearing our big smiles and our aprons are dotted with colorful leftovers of our baking escapades. Christmas music fills the air and nothing can dim our cheer because we're baking cookies. There is nothing more satisfying than getting the whole family together to bake old favorites or try our newly found cookie recipes.

One of my all time favorites is the crumbly and ever so elegant Austrian Vanilla Kipferl. It started a few years ago when I wanted to impress my, at the time new, mother-in-law. It was my first Christmas in the family and I wanted to do the whole shabang! We had invited them for Christmas Eve tea and, later, dinner and I decided that they were going to get the works. I dove right in and dug out many typical German recipes for duck, goose, vegetable sides, desserts and, of course, cookies. One of the things I baked for our tea was Vanilla Kipferl. These traditional Austrian specialties really epitomize Christmas cookies in Germany, Switzerland and Austria. You'll find them in every store, bakery and home during Christmas.

The small crescent shaped, nutty, butter tasting cookie has a strong flavor of vanilla. Usually the Kipferls are sprinkled in vanilla sugar after baking and when still warm. But they can also be baked with the flavoring of vanilla in the dough and then dipped only in powdered sugar.

What can I say - in Germany they have a saying "Love goes through the stomach" - and if it is true then I think my in-laws fell in love with me that Christmas. As for me - I was exhausted that evening, but Tom told me the next day I went to sleep with a smile on my face. Ever since then we have been baking these Kipferls for Christmas commemorating that crazy time.

Vanilla Kipferl
Recipe by Meeta, of **What's For Lunch Honey**

1 vanilla bean
210 g all-purpose flour
180 g butter - softened
50 g confectioners' sugar
Pinch of salt
70 g blanched almonds - finely ground. I sometimes coarsely grind them to add a new texture into the cookie.
2 egg yolks
60 g vanilla sugar - see below

1. Cut open the vanilla bean and scrape out the pith. Combine together the almonds with the flour, sugar, salt, vanilla pith, and butter. Using your fingers, work flour–nut mixture into butter until dough resembles coarse meal or breadcrumbs.

2. Mix in the egg yolks and knead to form a smooth dough. Wrap the dough in some plastic wrap and chill for approx. 30 minutes. This is an essential step, without the resting period, the dough will break when being formed into cookies.

3. Pre-heat oven to 180 degrees C. After resting cut the dough into 1/2 inch slices and roll each slice into a 3 inches long piece with pointy tapering ends; bend these into crescents shapes. Place on a baking sheet and bake in the center of the oven until light golden, about 12 minutes, rotating the sheets halfway through for even baking. The kipferls should not turn brown.

4. After baking dip the still hot cookies into powdered sugar and/or vanilla sugar. Handle the cookies with care, as they break quite easily, especially after baking. The cookies will keep for at least two weeks is a air tight container or a sealed cookie tin.

Tip: Place the vanilla pod without the seed in the tin or container with the cookies. This gives the cookies an additional vanilla aroma. To make vanilla sugar: Keep granulated sugar and a vanilla bean in an air tight jar, after a few weeks the sugar will taste of vanilla.

Swedish Almond Cookies

Recipe and Photographs by Michelle Laffler

I was looking for something different so I dug out one of my cookbooks (The Complete Cookie Book by Elizabeth Wolf Cohen, in case you were wondering) for inspiration....and I found it just a few pages ...Swedish Almond Wafers. Of course, I couldn't leave well enough alone and tweaked the recipe just a bit, but either way they'd be wonderful. These thin little cookies are delicate and lacy, but pack a lovely, buttery taste. Such a nice contrast to the thick, chewy cookies I've been baking lately.

These definitely aren't made for shipping, but I know they're going to be a hit on the cookie platter! And so… let the Holibaking continue! (Dear Santa… please bring me a bigger kitchen!)

Swedish Almond Cookies

Recipe by Michelle, of **Real Life Foodie Adventures** adapted from the Complete Cookie Book

3/4 cup slivered almonds
1/2 cup granulated sugar
1/2 cup unsalted butter, cut into pieces
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons light cream
2 dashes ground cinnamon

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease (or line with silpats) two large baking sheets. In a food processor, process almonds until very finely ground (do not overgrind or they'll form a paste). Add sugar and pulse a few more times to break down the sugar to a superfine consistency and ensure the almonds are evenly ground.

2. Combine the almond mixture, butter, flour, salt, cream and cinnamon in a medium, heavy-bottomed saucepan, and cook over medium heat until butter is melted and the batter is smooth. Remove from heat.

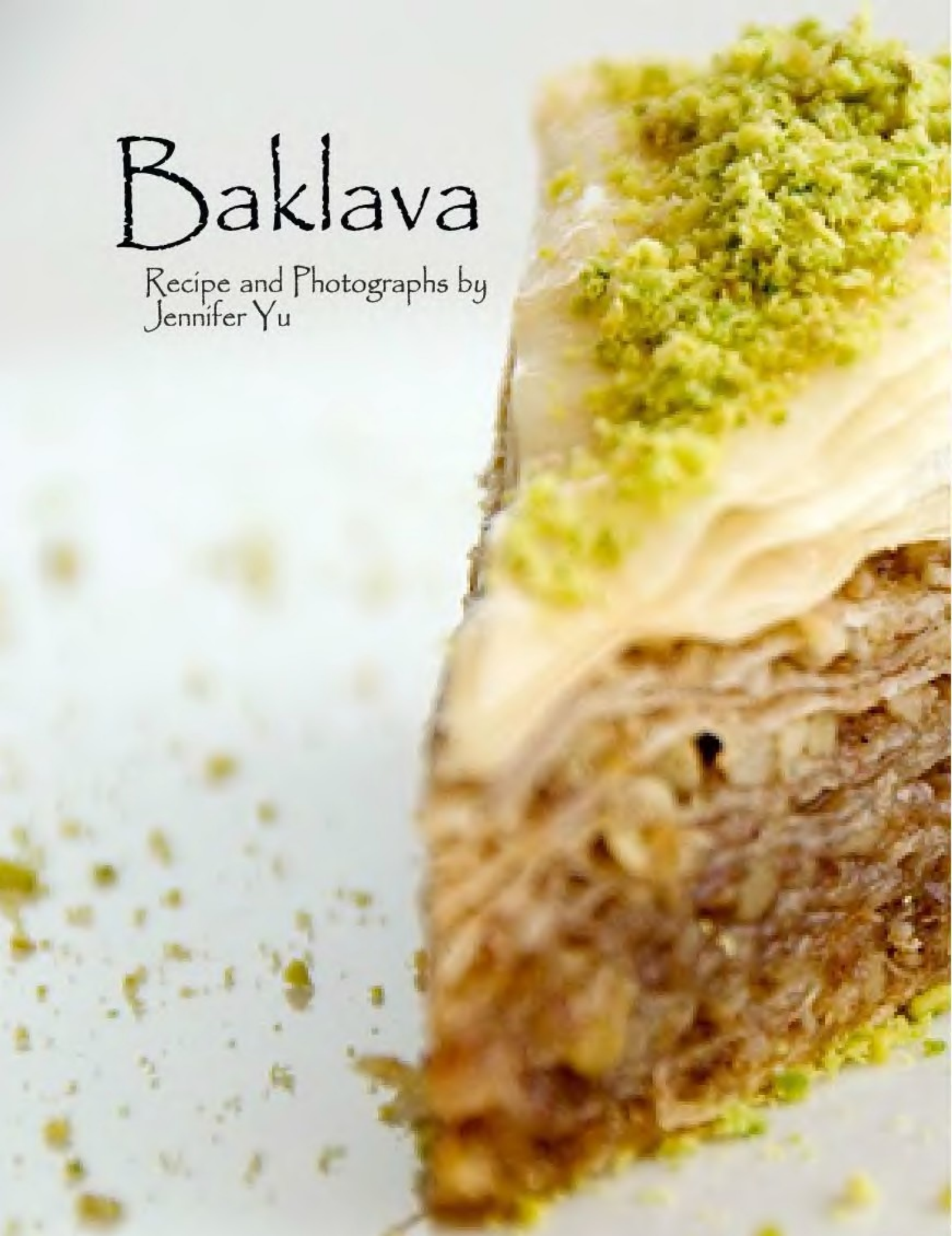
3. Drop by scant teaspoonfuls onto cookie sheet, 3-4 inches apart (the cookies will spread a lot). Bake 3-5 minutes, until lightly brown at the edges and bubbling in the center. Remove baking sheet to wire rack and cool slightly.

4. When edges are firm enough to lift, use a thin spatula (my offset spatula worked great for this) to remove cookies to wire racks to cool completely. Repeat with remaining batter, cooling (and regreasing if necessary) between each batch.

5. Cookies should be stored in airtight containers with wax paper between layers. They are *very* fragile.

Baklava

Recipe and Photographs by
Jennifer Yu



I learned to make baklava in fourth grade, if you can believe it. My local 4-H leaders included a chef who taught us to make baklava! I didn't actually remember the recipe, but I learned the tricks to handling phyllo dough so that when I made baklava in college, it was a cinch.

When I was in graduate school, I baked a lot because it was a stress reliever and well... there was a lot of stress. I always brought batches of cookies, whole cakes, or other sweets in for the geology department. In my department was a geophysicist from Syria - one of the nicest people I've ever had the privilege of knowing. Muawia would sample each treat and grade me on the overall quality. The first time I brought baklava to a party, he gave me an A- and said in a stern Syrian accent, "too sweet!" The next time I made baklava I was terrified of making it too sweet, so I reduced the sugar and Muawia's verdict, "A+".

I know the recipe is now correct, because it has Muawia's stamp of approval. Amazing what you learn in grad school.

Baklava

Recipe by Jen, of **Use Real Butter**

1 lb. phyllo pastry, thawed
1 cup butter, melted

Filling
4 cups walnuts (first measured, then fine chopped)
1/2 cup sugar
1 Tablespoon cinnamon

Syrup
3/4 cup water
1/2 cup sugar
1 stick cinnamon
2-inch slice of lemon peel
2-inch slice of orange peel
3/4 cup honey

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees F (I don't preheat until I'm almost done with the assembly).

2. Brush bottom of a 9×13 pan with butter. Layer phyllo then butter so that you have 8 sheets/layers. If your sheets are twice the size of the pan, then butter one half, fold the sheet over the buttered half and butter the top half. That counts as two layers.

3. Mix the walnuts, sugar, and cinnamon together. Sprinkle 1/3 cup of mixture over the phyllo in the pan. Set down two layers of phyllo/butter. Sprinkle with 1/3 cup of mixture. Repeat two layers of phyllo/butter and 1/3 cup of mixture until you finish with 8 layers of phyllo/butter on top.

4. Cut slices in the pan with a sharp knife - either diamonds or squares/rectangles. Bake for 1 hour and 25 minutes. Meanwhile, boil the water, sugar, peels and cinnamon stick for 15 minutes. Add the honey (careful that it doesn't boil over) and let boil for 2 more minutes.

5. When baklava is done, pour the syrup over the hot pan. Cool. Serve.

The trick is to first make sure you defrost it properly, either 24 hours in the refrigerator or several hours at room temperature. Next, it is important to keep the sheets covered with a damp towel whenever you are not removing a sheet. Be patient and gentle with the thin sheets of dough. And lastly, remember that with baklava, a few tears or folds will be barely noticeable.

I generally prefer to work with my phyllo sheets on a marble board. Most of the packages I buy come in full sheets. That's not a big deal - each sheet represents two layers of phyllo and I just brush one half with butter, fold the other half over, and brush the top of that half with butter… two sheets. They fit into a 9×13 baking dish just fine. Don't worry over the rounded corners if you have them, because people will eat those too.

The filling is simply chopped walnuts, sugar, and cinnamon mixed together. When spreading the filling, it will look incredibly scant and you may worry that there isn't enough. Trust me, it's fine because there are about a thousand layers of phyllo and filling. It's quite a lot, really.

At the start and end of the baklava assembly, there are 8 layers of phyllo to be stacked - top and bottom. Probably the only place you might care about using a good (i.e. not torn) sheet is on the very top. Once that is done, find your sharpest knife in the kitchen and slice the baklava into the sizes you want to serve. Be sure to cut all the way through the bottom layers or they will be pesky to deal with later when serving. I cut mine into 16 rectangles and then cut those rectangles into 32 diamonds. It helps to hold the top layers of phyllo down with your fingers because they like to drag.

Be sure to pour the syrup over the baklava when it is hot. I love the sound, smell, and vision of the sizzling syrup as it gets sucked into the layers of the pastry. Spread it evenly over the whole pan. It's easy enough to leave everything in the pan and bring it as is. I prefer to put each piece in a dessert paper ruffle (like muffin papers) if it isn't an intimate gathering. Sprinkled with ground pistachios.

Try this...

"Sweeten your life with honey..."

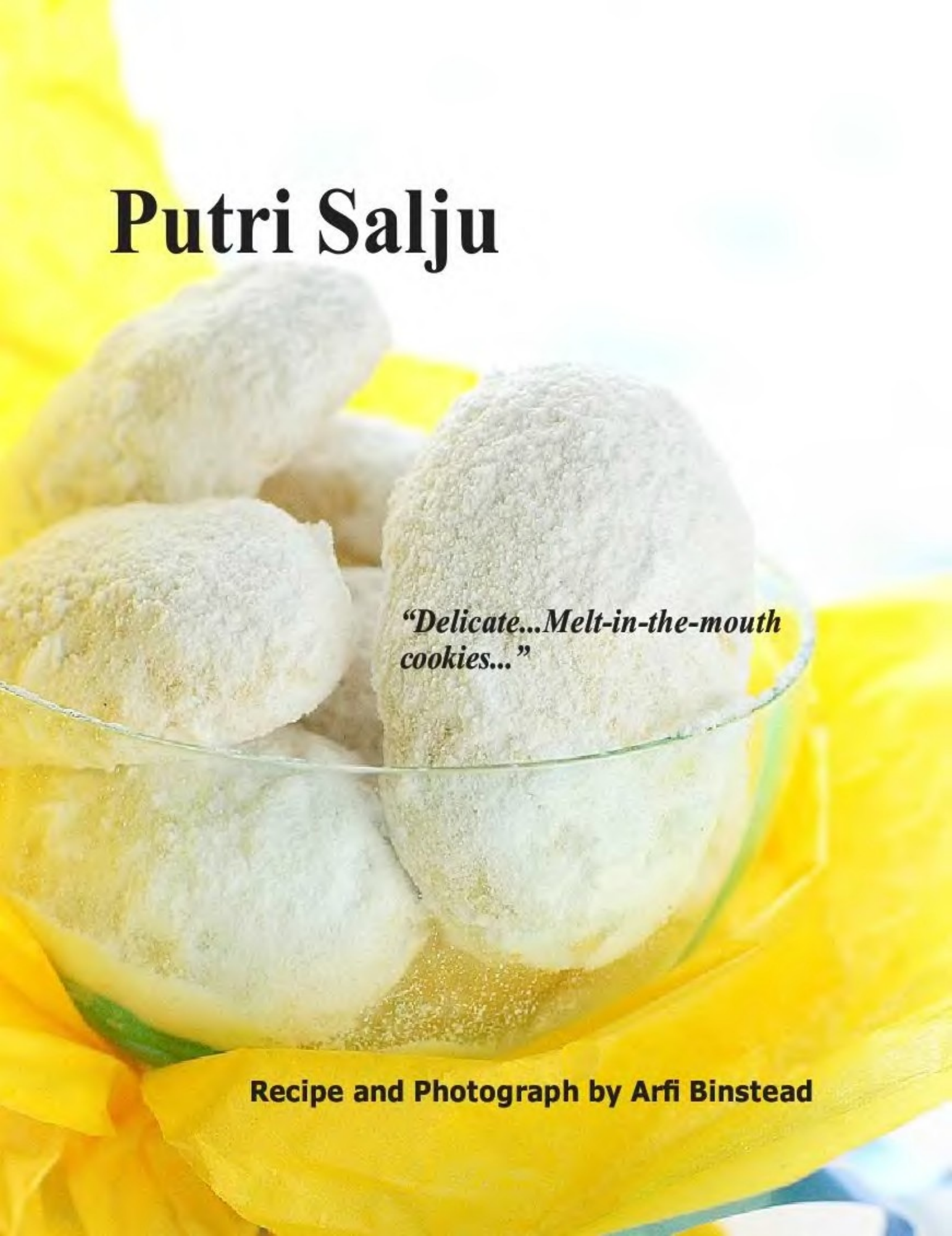
Raw Orange Blossom Honey
Honey like you've never experienced. Pure, unaltered and unpasteurized, this honey from bee raw is sweet and thick with strong notes of citrus and orange rind. Captivating on toast and entrancing stirred into hot tea. 10.5 oz. USA

Sulla Honey with Hazelnuts
We know an artisan beekeeper who carefully moves his beehives around the countryside of Sicily in rhythm with the seasonal flowering. He creates the loveliest honey - light in color, with a delicate and delicious floral flavor. Then, he produces the magic - the incorporation of the rich, deep flavor of the hazelnut - and an amazingly flavorful new spread is born. Try it on artisan bread or simply by the spoonful. Italy. 8.10 Ounces

Tupelo honey is often called "The Queen of the Honey World", and is considered the sweetest liquid gold in the South. Tupelonectaristransformed into a delicacy whose combination of strength, subtlety and sweetness is almost impossible to describe. Tupelo Honey never crystallizes in the bottle. www.teavana.com

Sourwood honey is an intricate and complex honey with a gingerbread taste that has won many world titles. Available for a limited time, and produced in the autumn season, if at all. www.teavana.com

Putri Salju



"Delicate...Melt-in-the-mouth cookies..."

Recipe and Photograph by Arfi Binstead

Putri Salju can literally be translated into "snow white", for the white sugar coating cookies resemble snow balls. This cookie is only one of various cookies that can be found in celebrated days, such as Eid Mubarak or Christmas in Indonesia. It is usually served accompanied by other buttery cookies, such as the most popular ananas ballen or nastar (a vanilla shortbread filled with homemade pineapple jam) and kaastengels (cheesy butter cookies). These cookies are either eaten in the morning/afternoon tea time, or are eaten after-lunch/dinner. Some people just like to nibble them as they come across.

Like many other butter cookies or cakes, Putri Salju is presumably introduced by Dutch in their 300 colonial years in Indonesia. Traditionally, Indonesian cakes are never made using butter and the cakes are steamed. The cakes are often made from a mixture of rice flour or glutinous rice flour, maize, or tapioca starch and moisten with fresh grated coconut threads, freshly squeezed coconut milk or oil. Nowadays, bakers in Indonesia have developed optional leavening agents to give cotton soft texture in cakes and melt-in-the-mouth feel in cookies, which are not my personal preference.

Putri Salju has been my favourite cookie in the celebration days, and sometimes I just make it at anytime of the year when I am craving for it. There are many ways to make Putri Salju. Some people like to keep the unbaked cookies in the refrigerator before baking, others like to add sugar in the dough while others do not like to add any sugar in the dough. I developed this recipe which will result in a "melt-in-the-mouth" cookies. I found out that toasting the flour is a good way to lighten the texture of the cookies. I do not keep the unbaked cookies in the refrigerator. I add milk powder to give a richer taste to the cookies. I also use a homemade vanilla flavored confectioners' sugar by mixing vanilla bean in the confectioners' sugar beacuse the store-bought vanilla sugar has an off-white color and makes the cookies look like it is covered in "muddy" snow. These cookies are better made 3 to 5 days prior to serving for the vanilla flavor to develop.

I like the crunchiness of cashew nuts and I love them as the additional flavor in the cookies. You can substitute the cashews for other nuts, but you will not be making putri salju. Instead you might end up making Greek Butter Cookies (Kourabiethes) which use ground almonds or Mexican Wedding Cakes (Russian Tea Cakes) which use pecans.

Recipe by Arfi Binsted, of **Homemades: The Joy of Domestic Cooking**

225g butter, unsalted
285g all-purpose flour, dry toast
15g whole milk powder
1-2 Tablespoon confectioners' sugar
125g cashew nuts, chopped coarsely
¼ teaspoon vanilla extract
confectioners' sugar or vanilla sugar to coat

1. Preheat oven to 300 degrees F (140 degrees C). Lightly grease or line parchment paper on cookie sheets.
2. Beat the butter and confectioners' sugar until white and fluffy. Fold in the dry toasted flour and milk powder, mix well. Add the chopped nuts and extract, mix well.
3. Roll into 1-inch balls or other dimension to your liking, put on the baking sheet, then baked for 15 minutes until when you press your finger on the cookies and there is no indentation.
4. When the cookies are cooled, roll into the confectioners' sugar.

LET IT SNOW...

TIP #1: You have the right piping consistency if the icicng squeeze easily out of a #2 tip and when you pipe two loops, the loops hold its shape and the loops does't run together where they overlap.

TIP #2: If your icing is too thick, add water 1 teaspoon at a time and beat for 1 minute after each addition. Repeat until you get the result you want.

TIP #3: If your icing is too thin,addmoreconfectioners' sugar 1 tablespoon at a time and beat for 1 minute after each addition. Repeat until you get the result you want.

As in anything else in life, the more you practice, the more precise you will be able to predict the right consistency.

Rolled Gingerbread Cookies

Cookie Craft Copyright © 2008 by Valerie Peterson and Janice Fryer . With permission of Storey Publishing. All rights reserved

These cookies have a mild gingerbread flavor, and they make the kitchen smell wonderful while they're baking! Feel free to increase the spices or even add the zest of an orange if you like. Note that this recipe yields more than the others: One recipe makes enough for the Santa's sleigh centerpiece on page 127.

1910-yield
2 1/2-inch cookies — about 48
3-inch cookies — about 37
4 1/2-inch cookies — about 18

Ingredients
5 cups (625g, 22 ounces) all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
zest of one orange (optional)
1 cup (227g, 8 ounces) unsalted butter,
softened
1 cup (225g, 8 ounces) granulated sugar
1 large egg
1 cup (340g, 12 ounces) molasses

1. Whisk together the flour, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, baking soda, salt, and orange zest (if using) in a medium bowl and set aside.

2. Using your mixer, cream together the butter and sugar until the mixture is light and fluffy. (If your mixer has multiple attachments, use the paddle.) Add the egg and molasses and mix until well blended.

3. With the mixer on low, gradually add the flour mixture to the butter mixture until the two are thoroughly blended.

4. Turn out the dough onto the work surface and divide it into three equal portions. Form each one into a rough disk. Place a disk of cookie dough on top of parchment paper, place another sheet of parchment paper. Roll the dough between parchment paper to 1/4-inch before it's chilled. Repeat the rolling process with the remaining dough portions. Refrigerate it until it's firm.

5. When the dough is firm, peel back the top paper from the dough and cut the dough into the desired shapes.

6. Preheat the oven to 350°F (177°C).

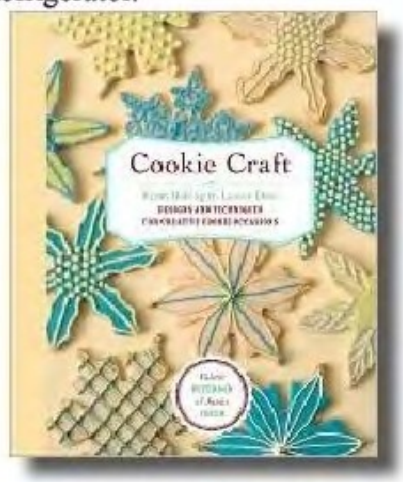
7. After you've cut the dough and the cookie shapes are on parchment-lined cookie sheets, Bake in the middle rack of your oven for 12–16 minutes or until the cookies start to turn slightly darker around the edges (smaller cookies will be done more quickly). Cool the cookies completely on a rack before icing or decorating.

Royal Icing Using Meringue Powder

For Piping
2 cups (250g, 1/2 pound) confectioners' sugar
4 teaspoons Meringue Powder
3 tablespoons warm water
1 tablespoon (lemon juice) or 1/2 - 1 teaspoon vanilla or other extract

For Flooding
4 cups (500g, 1 pound) confectioners' Sugar
3 tablespoons Meringue Powder
12 tablespoons warm water
2 tablespoons (lemon juice) or 1 - 2 teaspoons vanilla or other extract

Combine all ingredietns in the bowl of your electric mixer. Beat on high for 5 minutes if you are using an electric stand mixer or 10 minutes if using an electric hand mixer. When you reach the desired consistency, cover the mixture immediately or store in airtight containers. It is best to make and color your icing just before using it, but you can store for up to three days in the refrigerator.



Get this...

Wilton Metal Cookie Cutter Set of 18

Put variety in your cookie-making with fun Christmas multi-shape sets. There are shapes to please everyone.
This metal cookie cutter set includes: snowflake holly leaf gingerbread girl star sleigh tree stocking snowman reindeer ornament candy cane Santa hat angel bell gift wreath gingerbread boy and mitten. Each is approximately 3-inches, 18 cutters. www.amazon.com

Snowflake Cookie Cutters Set of 5

3 tinplate snowflakes and 2 interior cutters. No two are exactly alike. Make your snowflake cookies just like real with this 5-piece snowflake cookie cutter set. Beautiful, delicate designs create cookies to brighten the season or give as gifts. Hand wash and dry. Set includes 3 cutters ranging in size from 2-3/4" to 4-3/4" in dia. and 2 detail cutters. www.amazon.com

Rolling Pin Rings (8-pc.)

Multi-colored Rubber Rolling Pin Rings are ideal for getting your dough to an even, uniform thickness. Rings slip onto opposite ends of your rolling pin to provide 1/16", 1/8", 1/4" or 3/8" thickness of dough. Works on any standard-size rolling pin (Not Included). Great for pastries, cookies, jelly rolls, biscuits and more. www.amazon.com

Make edible holiday decorations with these easy Stained-Glass Cookie Cutters!

Use these nylon cutters to create ornament-shaped cookies beautiful enough to decorate your holiday tree. The spring-loaded cutters shape the cookies with cutouts for filling with crushed hard candy before baking. When the cookies come out of the oven, the candy will have melted into a translucent window that has the jewel-like sparkle of stained glass. Hand-wash. 3 1/2" to 4 3/4" long. Set of four, one of each shape. Only at www.williams-sonoma.com

EXPLORING COOKIES WITH **FIELD GUIDE TO COOKIES**

Text and Photograph by Helen Dujardin

Pecan Sandies. The recipe can be found on pages 283-85 in *Field Guide to Cookies* by Anita Chu or visit http://tartelette.blogspot.com/

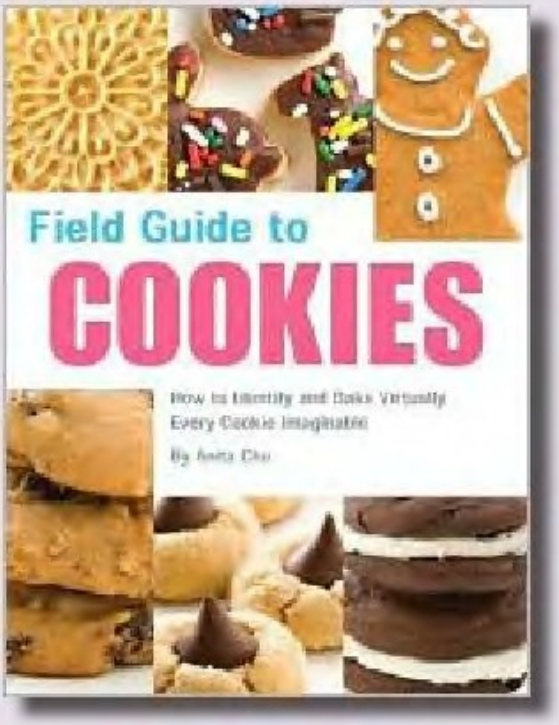
When a blogger becomes a friend, you are thrilled. When this friend becomes a published author, you have a proud smile on your face. This is exactly how I felt when I held Anita Chu's book, Field Guide To Cookies. It was exciting to see her name in print and to finally discover the fruit of her hard work this past year. "The Field Guide To" is a fun and informative series on how to master almost anything in the kitchen from meat to cocktails and, now, cookies. The whole format behind the series is to have a booklet full of information on how to achieve the perfect cookie, every time, whether you are a novice baker or a seasoned one.

The book is divided into four chapters: drop cookies, bar cookies, molded cookies and rolled cookies. The notes on the perfect cookies and baking tools are perfect for beginners in the kitchen, giving them detailed explanation of what usually goes wrong in cookie making. I enjoyed reading through it even though I have stopped counting my baked trays of cookies many moons ago as it is always good to get a refresher course, right?! The pocket size format makes it easy to have it around the kitchen and out on the counter top almost all the time. I like the fact that I can carry Anita's recipes with me on weekend escapades, family gatherings or at friends' and have a delicious recipe to prepare for them!

Although I expected high quality from Anita, knowing her care for details and wonderful writing skills, this book went beyond all of that! Each recipe is so much more than just a recipe. It starts with a general description that reads more like a history lesson then just a description of taste and texture. Serving suggestions, the recipe and modifications follow but if you are like me, you will quickly become addicted to deciphering the little icon on the left side of each cookie recipe. Indeed, each of them comes with a little coding system making it easy to know where you are in the recipe, mixing, baking, storing, etc…

To make sure I was giving the book a thorough review I tried to bake a cookie from each section and sometimes I got caught baking more! Vienese Crescent, Pecan Sandies, Indian Cookies, Algerian tarts, Turtle bars, dark chocolate crinkles,…They all turned out great and I only experienced a couple of (easy to fix) issues due to big variants in our humidity here in the South. I was so happy to be able to test Anita's recipe and read through the book that I asked her if she would be kind to answer a few questions that popped in my head while baking. Hope you enjoy the interview!

Get this...



BADAM KATLI

PHOTOGRAPH BY HELEN DUJARDIN

These diamond-shaped Indian almond cookies covered with edible silver very popular in India. The recipe can be found on pages 271-273 in *Field Guide to Cookies* by Anita Chu or visit http://tartelette.blogspot.com/

Up Close and Personal with Anita Chu....by Helen Dujardin

1. As the introduction states, this book is about more than just cookies, but also tea cakes and small bites. How did you decide which ones would make it into the book?

Even though 100 cookies sounds like a lot, it was tricky to decide which ones would make it and which ones would be cut. My editor and I wanted to cover as many styles of cookies as possible, and include ones that, maybe, many people had not heard of. Since the book was primarily targeted for a North American audience, we needed to include many of the classics familar to most people and not scare them away with too many strange and unknown cookies. I hope I found a balance between many traditional favorites like chocolate chip and oatmeal raisin, but also the more exotic and international, like macarons and pizzelles.

2. Which aspects of the writing experience did you like best? Baking, testing, researching?

I really enjoyed researching the cookies. Since this cookbook is a little different from most other cookbooks with the longer entries, I needed to do a lot more research than just looking up recipes: I needed to find out where the cookie had originated, who first made them, how it evolved through time. I definitely boned up on my world history doing research on this book! Of course, I also enjoyed testing the recipes - my one biggest wish is that I had more time to test the recipes, because you always think of something else to tweak that might turn the recipe from good to fantastic! I had a great team of recipe testers to help me out, although sometimes I wished I had their job and could just bake all day, forget about the research and the writing part!

3. Name your Top 5 favorites either to make or eat?

Financiers - The first time I ever made browned butter was for financiers, and for that they'll always have a soft spot in my heart.

Chinese Almond Cookies - I actually never made these before this book - I always ate the premade kind from a box and they were awful. It was a revelation to make them from scratch and discover they could be so delicious!

Linzer Cookies - This is my go-to "fancy" cookie. It's surprisingly simple and the results are always so elegant - people are always so impressed when all I've done is spread some jam on a cookie and sprinkle it with powdered sugar!

Palmiers - One of my favorite ways of using puff pastry. I love watching them bake in the oven - it's like magic.

Molasses Spice Cookies - This is my boyfriend's favorite cookie. He loves spicy cookies and because of him I have a new appreciation for them too!

4. Are there any cookie(s) that you would have liked to include but did not?

I would have loved to include more international cookies, but we were afraid we might have trouble translating them to a North American audience, since I was not very familiar with some of them myself. Some that might have required ingredients, advanced techniques or equipment out of the reach to the typical home baker we also decided to cut. For example, we almost didn't include palmiers because we didn't want to write a 5 page recipe on making puff pastry, until I came up with the idea of using blitz puff instead. My editor wanted to include croquembouche! But we changed that to profiteroles instead. Also, there were many cookies that were fairly similar in taste and style, where we decided we should only include one version, so that there could be a bigger variety of cookies in the book. (If you need more specific examples, I can go look up in my notes!!)

5. What's next for you? I know you are going to be teaching at Tante Marie in San Francisco, what classes are you looking forward to?

I just signed a contract to do a second book with my publisher Quirk Books - it's going to be another Field Guide, topic to be revealed next year! I really enjoyed the first experience and I'm excited to have another chance to work with Quirk again. I also have a dream to do my own cookbook one day, with recipes drawn from my own experiences and tastes, so hopefully that might happen sometime in the future! I am also going to be teaching at Tante Marie's, my pastry school. My first class will be on cupcakes, and if that works out well, maybe there will be more!

Whoopie Pies

by Anita Chu

FICTION OR FACT...
Legend has it that whoopie pie got the name from the way Amish children would say "Whoopie!" when they found it in their lunchbox.

"These sandwich cookies with fluffy white filling sandwich are very popular in New England and Pennsylvania Dutch Country...I am sure it will be one of your favorites."

Whoopie Pies

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2 cups all-purpose flour
1 1/4 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 cup Dutch-process cocoa powder
1 teaspoon salt
1 cup light brown sugar
1/2 cup softened unsalted butter
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 cup buttermilk

Filling:
1/2 cup softened unsalted butter
1 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
2 cups marshmallow cream (such as Marshmallow Fluff)
1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease several cookie sheets.

2. Sift together flour, baking soda, cocoa powder, and salt into a medium bowl, and set aside.

3. In a stand mixer, cream butter and sugar on medium speed for several minutes until light and fluffy. Add egg and vanilla and mix until combined.

4. Add the flour mixture and the buttermilk to the dough in 3 additions, alternating between wet and dry ingredients.

5. Drop 1/4 cup mounds of dough 3 inches apart on cookie sheets. Bake for 12 minutes, rotating cookie sheets halfway through. Allow cookie sheets to cool for 5 minutes before moving cookies to wire racks with a metal spatula.

6. For the filling: In a stand mixer, cream butter and confectioners' sugar at medium speed until light and fluffy. Add marshmallow cream and vanilla, decrease speed, and beat until smooth.

7. Spread 1 - 2 tabespoons of filling across half of the cokies and place the other cookies on top. Then turn the spatula around the sides to even out the filling and keep it from spilling out.

Yield: About 1 dozen cookie sandwiches.

Storage: The cookies can be kept in an airtight container for 3 days, and the filling can be made up to 4 days in advance; however, they are best when eaten within a day or two of baking.

Anita's Notes: For a smaller pie, portion out the dough with an ice cream or cookie scoop.

Editor's Notes: Lightly spray the measuring cup with cooking oil spray that will help the marshmallow fluff slide of the measuring cup.

Recipes by Anita Chu
Photograph by Helen Dujardin

Chocolate Crinkles

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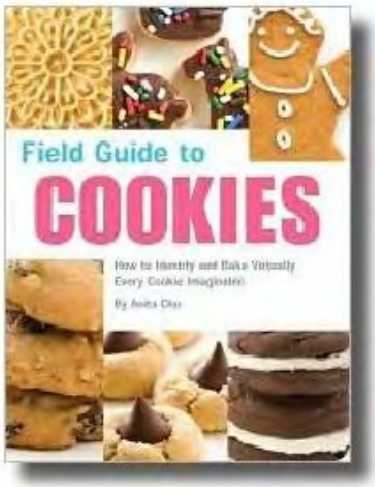
6 oz. semisweet chocolate, chopped into small pieces
1/4 cup plus 2 tablespoons softened unsalted butter
1/2 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons cocoa powder
3/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
Confectioners' sugar for rolling



1. Melt chocolate and butter in a metal bowl over a pot of simmering water, stirring occasionally until evenly melted. Remove from heat and set aside.

2. In a stand mixer, beat sugar and eggs on ,medium speed for several minutes until thick and smooth. Add the vanilla extract and melted chocolate mixture, and beat on medium-low until combined.

3. Sift flour, cocoa, baking powder, and salt into a bowl.

4. Add flour mixture, and mix until combined.

5. Cover dough and chill in refrigerator for about 2 hours or until firm enough to scoop.

6. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Line several cookie sheets with parchment paper or silicone baking mats.

7. Roll 1-inch balls of dough in confectioners' sugar, coating completely; place balls about 1 1/2 inches apart on cookie sheets. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through, until they just start to feel firm. Cool sheets on wire racks for about 5 minutes before tranferring cookies directly onto wire racks with a metal spatula to finish cooling. Yield: About 4 dozen cookies.

Storage: Store flat in an airtight container for up to 2 days. These cookies should be served quickly, as the confectioners' sugar will melt over time.

Anita's notes: Use the best quality semisweet or bittersweet chocolate and cocoa powder; do not use milk chocolate or chocolate chips; bake these cookies one cookie sheet at a time; and, be carefull not to overbake the cookies.

"These Algerian cookies combine the delicate aroma of rosewater with almonds and glazed with honey syrup..."

Recipes by Anita Chu
Photograph by Helen Dujardin

Dziriate (Algerian Almond Tarts)

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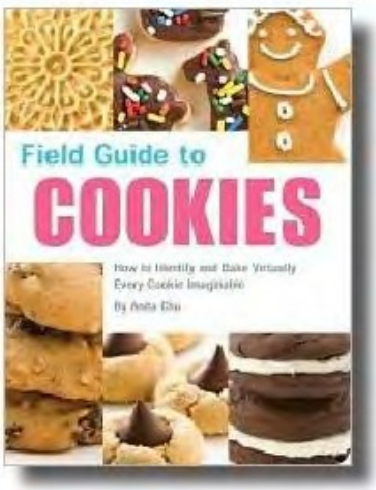
Pastry
2 cups all-purpose flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup unsalted butter, melted
2 eggs
3/4 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 tablespoons rosewater or orange flower water
1 teaspoon lemon juice

Filling
3 cups sliced almonds
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 1/2 teasppons lemon zest
2 teaspoons rosewater or orange flower water
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Topping:
1/2 cup honey
Pine nuts (optional)



1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a few cookie sheets or line with silicone baking mats.

2. In a mixer, combine the flour and salt. With the mixer running on low speed, gradually add butter, eggs, vanilla, rosewater, and lemon juice. Mix for a few minutes until dough is smooth. Cover dough with a damp cloth and set side while you make the filling.

3. Using a food processor, grind almonds and sugar to a fine meal. Add eggs, lemon zest, rosewater, and vanilla and process until all ingredients are evenly incorporated.

4. Roll out dough to about 1/16 inch on a lightly floured surface. Use a 2- to 3- inch cookie cutter to cut out circles from the dough.

5. Drop tablespoons of filling into the center of each circle. Wet fingers with water and pinch the dough together into four corners, forming a cup around the filling. Or, if you have a mini muffin tin or other small molds, fit the dough circles into the molds and fill about 3/4 full with filling.

6. Place tarts on sheets. Bake for 20 minutes, rotating sheets halfway through until filling begins to brown and the cookies are a light golden color. Remove sheets from oven and place on wire racks. Drizzle honey over each of the tarts. Let tarts cool on sheets before serving. Yield: About 2 1/2 dozen cookies.

Storage: Store in an airtight container for up to 1 week.

Anita's Notes: Rosewater is often substituted with orange flower water, or the two are combined. These tarts are traditionally made with clarified butter, but melted butter also works. The cookies are often made free-form, but they can be made in tart tins or mini muffin tins.

Pizzelle

Recipe by Anita Chu

Pizelles are thin, wafer-like cookies that have snowflake or floral designs imprited on them using a pizelle iron. One in two cookie, make a stroopwafels by filling the cookies with chocolate ganache, your favorite jams or jellies, ice creams and sorbets to make a sandwich cookie or shape the cookies into a cylinder to make cannolis, cones or cups to hold ice cream, pastry cream, and/or fruits. Vary the flavor by substituting the extract, or adding cocoa powder to make chocolate pizelles. For more recipes go to www.dessertsmag.com

Pizzelle

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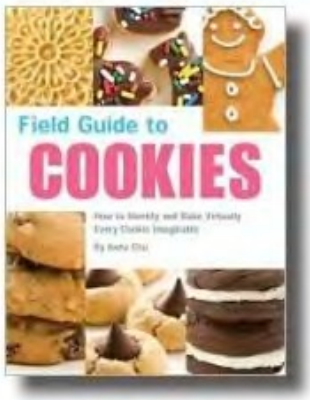
Yield: About 2 dozen 4-inch cookies

2/3 cup plus ½ cup all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
1/8 teaspoon salt
2 eggs
½ cup sugar
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ teaspoon lemon extract
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

1. Sift flour, baking powder, and salt into a bowl and set aside.
2. In a stand mixer with the whisk attachment, whip the eggs and sugar on high speed until thickened.
3. Combine the vanilla and lemon extracts with the melted butter. With mixer running on low speed, gradually add the butter mixture. Mix just until combined.
4. Remove bowl from mixer and add in the flour mixture. Mix with a rubber spatula until the batter is fully combined and smooth.
5. Cover batter and allow to rest for 15 minutes.
6. Preheat the electric pizzelle press according to the manufacturer's instructions. Open press and place 2 teaspoonfuls of batter on each pizzelle grid. Bake according to the manufacturer's instructions. Note: the first few pizzelles are never perfect; observe the positioning of the batter and finished color so you can adjust for the following pizzelles.
7. Gently lift pizzelles from press and cool completely on a wire rack.



Storage: Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days or freeze stacked in an airtight container layered with waxed or parchment paper for up to 1 week.

Anita's Notes: The batter should be able to drop easily from a spoon onto the pizelle iron, but it should not be runny. If your batter seems too thin, add a little flour; if it seems too thick, add a few drops of water.

Get this...

Produce perfect Pizzelles and Cannolis just like the pros using this nonstick Pizzelle Iron by Chef's Choice. It's called the Express Bake because it makes 3 3-inches pizzelles in less than 60 seconds, perfect when you're pressed for time, and releases easily from the nonstick surface. Select your preferred color, from golden to brown and keep your eye on the "ready light". Instant temperature recovery ensures the iron is always ready to bake the next batch evenly and consistently. A locking latch ensures uniform thickness. Overflow channel allows for easy cleaning. Features a space saving design for upright storage and has a built-in cord storage. www.cooking.com

Mandelbrot

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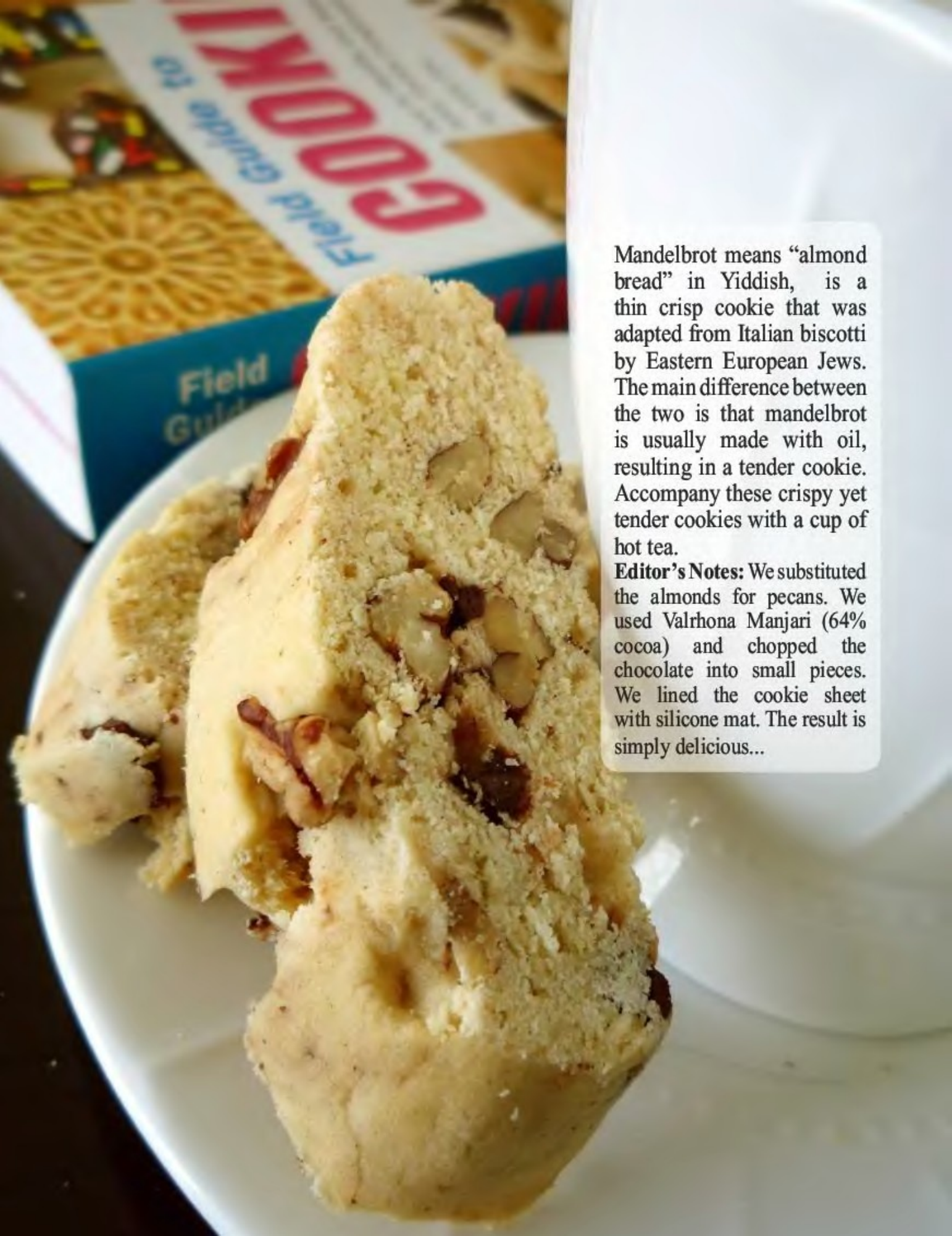
2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
4 tablespoons softened unsalted butter
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons sugar
4 ½ teaspoons vegetable oil
2 eggs
¾ teaspoon fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon almond extract
½ cup chocolate chips
½ cup chopped almonds

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease a cookie sheet or line with parchment paper.
2. Sift flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt into a bowl and set aside.
3. In a stand mixer, cream butter and sugar on medium speed for several minutes until light and fluffy. Add oil and mix to combine.
4. Add eggs, one at a time, and mix until fully incorporated. Add lemon juice and extracts.
5. Add flour mixture in two additions. Mix just until combined. Add chocolate chips and almonds and mix to combine.
6. Turn out dough onto lightly floured work surface. Form dough into on mass, then divide into two equal pieces.
7. Roll each piece of dough into a log about 1 ½ inches in diameter. Transfer each to the cookie sheet, spacing them about 4-5 inches apart. Use palm of hand to flatten each log until it is about ½ inch thick.
8. Bake for 20 minutes, rotating sheet halfway through. Let Mandelbrot logs rest on a cookie sheet for 20 minutes. Logs will still be slightly spongy to the touch, similar to a dense bread.
9. Lower the oven temperature to 250 degrees F.
10. After 2 minutes, remove Mandelbrot logs from sheet and place on a cutting board. Using a serrated knife, in one quick motion for each slice, cut log into ½ inch slices. Return the slices, cut side up, to the cookie sheet. You can place the slices right next to each other, filling up the entire sheet, as the Mandelbrot will no longer expand.
11. Return sheet to the oven and bake cookies for 40 minutes. Remove and let cool.
Yield: About 4 dozen cookies

Storage: Store in an airtight container for up to 10 days. These cookies are also excellent frozen and will stay fresh for up to 6 weeks.



Mandelbrot means "almond bread" in Yiddish, is a thin crisp cookie that was adapted from Italian biscotti by Eastern European Jews. The main difference between the two is that mandelbrot is usually made with oil, resulting in a tender cookie. Accompany these crispy yet tender cookies with a cup of hot tea.

Editor's Notes: We substituted the almonds for pecans. We used Valrhona Manjari (64% cocoa) and chopped the chocolate into small pieces. We lined the cookie sheet with silicone mat. The result is simply delicious...

Get this...

Matfer Exopat 11.75x16.5-in. Baking Mat

If you love to bake but are disheartened by cookies and pastries that burn and stick, you'll certainly appreciate this flexible, non-stick Exopat Baking Mat. Made in France, the mat promotes even browning without burning, and easy removal from the pan without sticking. To use, simply place the mat on your baking sheet – no greasing required. Place your cookies or pastries on top of the mat and bake in the oven as you normally would. After baking, simply remove the mat, shake it clean and store it away until next time. The mat is freezer-safe and can withstand oven temperatures up to 580 degrees F.

Use it over and over – it's guaranteed to last up to 3,000 bakings. Do not use water; just "Shake It." Store either flat or lightly rolled www.cooking.com

Chicago Metallic Cooling Grids

These handy grids are the fastest way to cool cakes, muffins and other baked goods, as well as keeping your cookies crisp as they cool. Ten times stronger than other nonstick bakeware, all Chicago Metallic Professional Bakeware is made of heavyweight aluminized-steel and can handle temperatures up to 550 degrees F. Nonstick surface won't chip or peel. Medium 14"L x 9 1/2"W chrome grid fits all Chicago Metallic small jelly roll pans; large 16 3/4"L x 11 1/2"W nonstick grid fits all Chicago Metallic large jelly roll pans. www.cooking.com

"Essential tools that will make a breeze making cookies..."

Vollrath Co. 17x14-in. Cookie Sheet

How many of you have been startled by the sound of a baking sheet that warps when it is taken out of the oven to cool on the counter??? No more, we found the perfect cookie sheet! Its 8-gauge thickness makes this the best cookie sheet, with even heat distribution. Easy to clean and easy to store. Heavy-gauge 3004 aluminum heats rapidly and evenly. www.amazon.com

OXO GOOD GRIPS Cookie Scoops

For easy scooping and consistently round cookies, try the OXO GOOD GRIPS Cookie Scoops. Our Small, Medium and Large Scoops all have soft grips that absorb pressure while you squeeze to easily release your cookie dough. Dishwasher safe. www.amazon.com

Small Scoop holds 2 tsp. and yields a 2-in. diameter cookie. Size 60 portioner

Medium Scoop holds 1.5 Tbsp. and yields a 2.75-in. diameter cookie. Size 40 portioner

Large Scoop holds 3 Tbsp. and yields a 3.5-in. diameter cookie. Size 20 portioner

Try this...

Egg whites are no longer necessary for making meringues! Alice owner/ baker of AngelFood is at it again. She came up with a Vegan Meringue Cookie Mix. This new Angel Food product contains all the necessary ingredients required to make about 100 light, crispy, melt in your mouth egg-free meringue cookies by just adding some water and caster or super-fine sugar. Vegan and non-vegan alike will sure enjoy making these vegan meringue cookies. The baked meringues will last about a month if stored in an airtight container. To order go to www.angelfood.co.nz

Vegan Meringue Cookies
Recipe for 24 cookies (Each about 5 cm or 2 inches diameter)

2 tablespoons sachet A
1/4 cup cold water
3/4 cup super-fine or caster sugar
2 1/2 teaspoons sachet B
2 teaspoons of pure vanilla extract

1. Add 2 tablespoons sachet A and cold water into a mixer bowl. (Photo 1)Mix on high speed for several minutes, until it is light and fluffy, and it forms soft peak when you lift the whisk up. (Photo 2)

2. In a bowl, combine caster sugar or super-fine sugar and 2 1/2 teaspoons sachet B.

3. With the mixer running on high speed, gradually add 1/4 cup of sugar/sachet B mixture at a time. Beat for at least 30 seconds between additions. (Photo 3)

4. The mixture is ready when you lift the beater and it is thick and fluffy and form stiff peaks. (Photo 4) The more you mix, the meringue will be higher.

5. Scoop the meringue into a piping bag using a large star tip. Pipe out meringues on to a baking tray lined with silicone mat or parchment paper. (Photo 5)

6. Place the oven rack in the second upper row. Bake in a low oven (100°C or 212°F). After about 30 minutes, depending on your oven and on the size of the cookies, the meringues will be crisp and ready to enjoy. (Photo 6)

Taste this...

Mariposa Baking

Who could imagine these were not made with gluten-rich wheat flour and dairy? If you know someone on a gluten and dairy restricted diet, they are going to love Mariposa Coconut Lemon Squares! These lemony nutty square with large shavings of chewy coconut, pieces of pecans and a lemon filling atop a dairy and gluten-free cookie base is simply irresistible! To order visit www.mariposabaking.com.

Large chewy coconut flakes with pieces of pecans and lemon filling...

Filled with the right amounts of nuts and chocolates.

Suzanne's Sweets

These hand-rolled rugelach is created from the finest, highest-quality, all natural ingredients such as: unbleached flour, sour cream, unsalted butter, fruit preserves, walnuts, brown sugar, chocolate, cinnamon and salt. Available in five flavors: Apricot, Chocolate, Strawberry, Cinnamon Raisin, and Raspberry.

These rugelach are light, flaky and moist. They're over-filled with rich chocolate, luscious fruits, and nuts. To order www.suzannessweets.com

Give this...

The Freedom Cake

Bake Me A Wish! will deliver a gourmet birthday cake to a soldier serving overseas, in the name of your recipient for the holidays, with each purchase of The Freedom Cake. The Freedom Cake features a layer of deluxe chocolate mint brownie thickly blanketed with smooth & creamy fudge frosting,

with an avalanche mint chips adorning the top and bittersweet chocolate shavings all along the sides. Each cake will be shipped domestically in the US, featuring a special card informing the recipient that a cake has been sent to a soldier in their name, alongside an imprint of the American Flag. Soldiers overseas will receive this exact same cake you order here! Administered by Soldiers' Angels. To order go to **www.bakemeawish.com**

Soldiers' Angels is a volunteer-led nonprofit, with over 20 different teams and programs supporting all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces. They send letters, care packages, and comfort items to the deployed, and support their families in the US. They also provide assistance to the wounded, continuing support for veterans, remembrances and comfort for families of the fallen, and immediate response to unique difficulties.

Be an Angel Baker...

The Angel Bakers are a group of highly dedicated Soldiers' Angels who bake homemade treats for deployed military heroes.

Each month the Angel Bakers send specially-made cookies, brownies, and other treats to units identified by Soldiers' Angels as needing extra Angel love. Soldiers who may have been through an especially difficult experience during their deployment, living in especially trying conditions, or in need of a morale boost for a job well done. Their aim is to show our heroes how much people back home appreciate and care about them.

Being an Angel Baker takes commitment and dedication. Each Angel Baker is asked to mail one box each month. Of course, Angel Bakers are welcome to send more than one, but each Baker must send at least one box per month. Angel Bakers must operate with confidentiality and discretion; all recipient contact information is strictly confidential.

While their primary focus is on sending a touch of home with homemade goodies, some of Angel Bakers have also sent bakery or store-bought items. Healthy snacks such as trail mix, nuts, and granola are especially appreciated and make excellent "filler" or padding to add to the baked goods box.

To become an Angel Bakers or for more information, visit **www.soldiersangels.org**

Recipe by Nancy Baggett
Photograph byh Vera Shepherd

These bars feature a crunchy crumb topping, a zesty filling, and a rich buttery taste that balances the tartness of the rhubarb nicely. They are perfect for serving at a coffee klatch or a dessert after an informal meal.

This soul-satisfying American recipe spotlights an old-fashioned country garden staple, rhubarb – a hardy, unfussy perennial that, like magic, offers up succulent red stalks each spring. (The leaves aren't edible.)

Until fruits and vegetables became widely available year-round in America, rhubarb was considered an important spring restorative because it appeared very early in the season and helped break the monotony of a starchy winter diet. It's probably no coincidence that this recipe pairs rhubarb with strawberry jam. Moreover, the fresh, astringent rhubarb perks up the strawberry jam and makes it taste fresh, too. It's best to serve these bars promptly, the topping loses its crispness upon standing.

Strawberry-Rhubarb streusel Bars

Makes 20
(2¼ - by - 2 ½ bars)

FILLING
¼ cup sugar
2 ½ tablespoons cornstarch
2 ½ cups ¾ to 1 inch long rhubarb pieces (a generous ¾ pound untrimmed), fresh or frozen, thawed and drained
1 ¼ cups strawberry jam or preserves
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon finely grated orange zest (colored part of the skin; optional)

CRUMB MIXTURE
1 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
1 2/3 cups old-fashioned rolled oats
1 cup sugar
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon salt
¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) unsalted butter, very soft but not melted
1 large egg, lightly beaten with 1 ½ teaspoons water

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Generously grease a 9-by-13-inch glass baking pan or coat with nonstick spray.

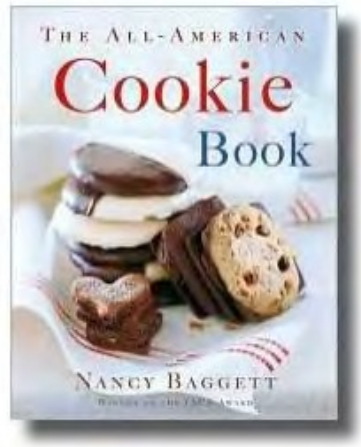
FOR THE FILLING
In a medium, heavy, non reactive saucepan, stir together the sugar and cornstarch until well blended. Stir in the rhubarb, jam or preserves, cinnamon, and orange zest, if using. Bring to a simmer, stirring, over medium-high heat. Cook, stirring for 3 to 6 minutes, or until the rhubarb softens just slightly (fresh rhubarb will take longer than thawed frozen). Set aside.

FOR THE CRUMB MIXTURE
In a large bowl, thoroughly stir together the flour, oats, sugar cinnamon, and salt. Add the butter and stir or knead with your hands until the mixture is well blended and crumbly. Firmly press a scant half of the crumb mixture into the baking dish; set aside the remaining crumb mixture.

Bake in the middle of the oven for 13 to 16 minutes, or until firm but not browned. Spread the rhubarb filling evenly over the crumb layer. Stir together the reserved crumb mixture and 2 ½ tablespoons of the egg mixture until the streusel forms clumps; add a little more of the egg mixture, if needed. Sprinkle the streusel evenly over the filling, breaking up any large clumps with a fork or your fingertips.

Bake in the middle of the oven for 35 to 40 minutes, or until the streusel is nicely browned and the filling in bubbly. Transfer the pan to a wire rack and let stand until completely cooked.
Using a large, sharp knife, cut into 20 bars; wipe the knife clean between cuts.

Store in an airtight container for up to 2 days. The bars may be frozen for up to 1 month but will lose their crispness. If freezing, leave the slab whole, then cut into bars when partially thawed.



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Bourbon balls started turning up in the late 1930s and continue to have ardent fans today, especially in the south. Perhaps these pleasingly boozy, no-bake cookies came about in response to the 1933 lifting of Prohibition and the reemergence of bourbon distilling after so many dark years.

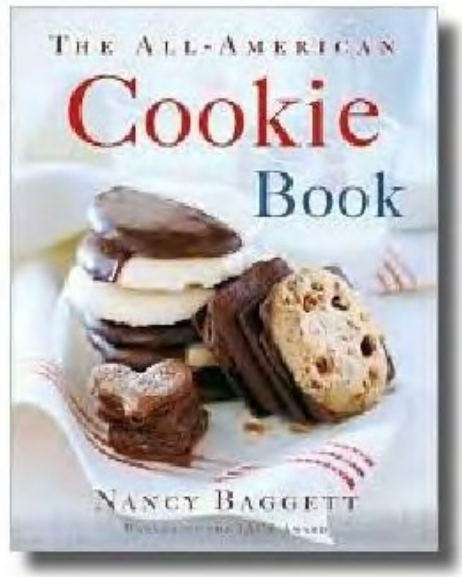
Bourbon Balls

Makes about 25 (1-inch) cookies

The earliest bourbon ball recipes usually included cocoa powder, but no chocolate morsels; Nestlé didn't start making chocolate morsels until 1939. However, I think the chocolate helps round out and enrich the pecan and bourbon flavors, so I have provided a slightly more modern version here. This updated recipe also calls for grinding the vanilla wafers, pecans, and chocolate morsels in a food processor, which means the cookies are a snap to make. They will probably seem too potent when first prepared but will mellow nicely if left overnight.

1 ½ cups coarsely crushed vanilla wafers
1 1/3 cups (about 5 ½ ounces) chopped pecans
1/3 cup (2 ounces) semisweet chocolate morsels
3/4 cup powdered sugar
2 ½ tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder, Dutch-process or American-style
2 ½ tablespoons light or dark corn syrup
1/3 cup bourbon
1/2 cup powdered sugar (for coating)

1. In a food processor, process the vanilla wafers, pecans, and chocolate morsels until ground to a powder. Add ¾ cup of the powdered sugar and the cocoa powder and process until evenly incorporated. With the motor running, add the corn syrup and bourbon through the feed tube and process just until well blended. If necessary, let the mixture stand for 5 to 10 minutes to firm slightly, or if the mixture is dry, add up to 1 tablespoon water, processing until smoothly incorporated.
2. Shape the mixture into 1-inch balls with lightly greased hands. Spread the remaining ½ cup powdered sugar in a shallow bowl. Roll the balls in the powdered sugar until thoroughly coated. Let the cookies mellow in an airtight container at least overnight before serving.
3. Store in an airtight container for up to 4 days, refrigerate for up to 2 weeks, or freeze for up to 1 month.



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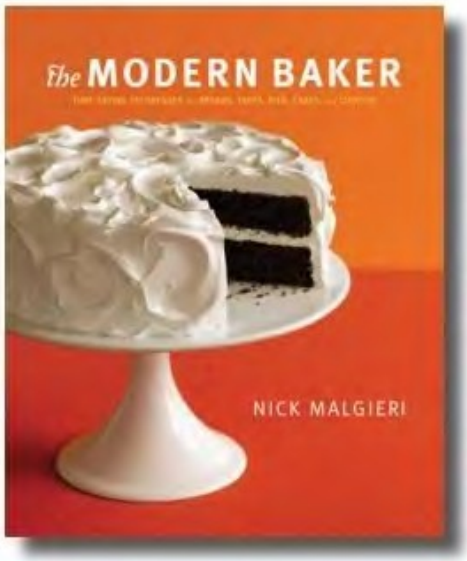
Editor's Note: This is a very easy adult no-bake cookies. If the mixture is too wet, add more finely crushed vanilla wafers. It is essential to use good quality bourbon.

Read this...

These books are great references to add to your collections.

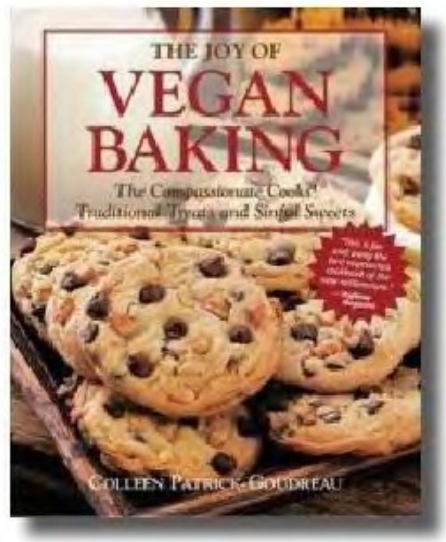
The Modern Baker: Time-Saving Techniques for Breads, Tarts, Pies, Cakes and Cookies



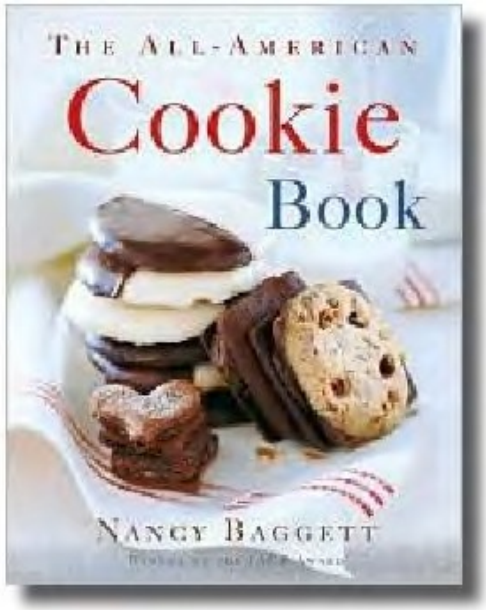
Nick Malgieri has the magic touch when it comes to baking. His pies? Impossibly flaky. He's even come up with a time-saving method that takes all the work out of making croissants. The secret? Mix the dough in the food processor, and voilà, it needs to be rolled and folded only once. Amazing!

This celebrated pastry chef knows how to make novice and expert bakers alike cheer at the delicious results of their efforts. He has distilled his 30 years of experience into 150 classic and contemporary recipes, for most of which the prep time is under an hour. He walks you every step of the way through measuring, mixing, shaping, baking, cooling and finishing, so you'll be turning out perfect pound cake, irresistible pastries, focaccia, cookies, quick breads, with the ease and joy of a pro. Step-by-step photos clearly illustrate techniques such as rolling pita bread or decorating cakes, but big beautiful photos showcasing a taste-tempting selection of treats will make it difficult to decide which to bake next! www.amazon.com

The Joy of Vegan Baking: The Compassionate Cooks' Traditional Treats and Sinful Sweets



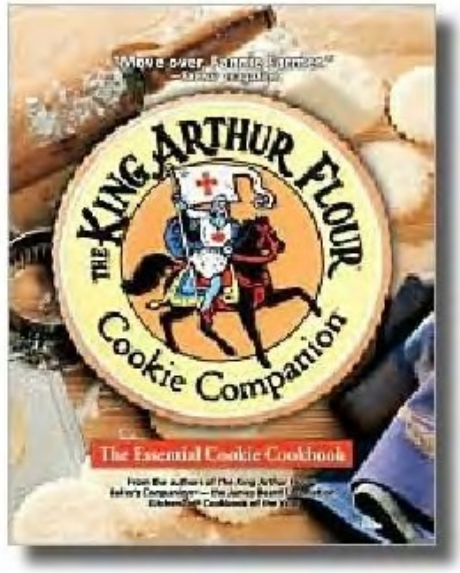
Colleen Patrick-Goudreau puts to rest the myth that vegan baking is an inferior alternative to non-vegan baking, putting it in its rightful place as a legitimate contender in the baking arena. More than just a collection of recipes, this informative cookbook is a valuable resource for any baker -- novice or seasoned. Whether you want to bake dairy- and egg-free for health, ethical, or environmental reasons, The Joy of Vegan Baking lets you bake your cake and eat it, too! Featuring 150 familiar favorites -- from cakes, cookies, and crepes to pies, puddings, and pastries -- this book will show you just how easy, convenient, and delectable baking without eggs and dairy can be. This book will be an essential reference for every vegan. www.amazon.com



The All-American Cookie Book celebrates American regional gems from every corner of the country: Pennsylvania Dutch Soft Sugar Cookies, New York Black and Whites, New Mexican Biscochitos, Key Lime Frosties from Florida, and Mocha Espresso Wafers from Seattle. A sophisticated hazelnut chocolate sandwich cookie that was closely guarded secret of an Oregon hostess is here, and so is a delightfully crisp (and easy to roll out) old-fashioned gingerbread cookie recreated from a handwritten 1880 notebook.

For children and adults alike, one of the most exciting chapters will be the lavishly illustrated "Cookie Decorating and Crafts," which includes everything from simple projects like Christmas cookies and Chocolate Gingerbread Bears to an elaborate gingerbread house. As Nancy Baggett tells the story of America's heritage, she slips in fascinating bits of history, showing the evolution of American homegrown baking traditions. www.amazon.com

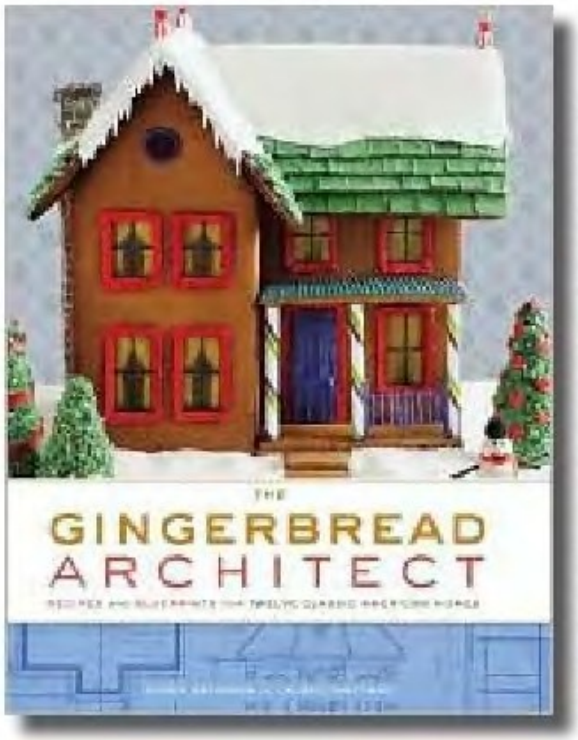
The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion: The Essential Cookie Cookbook



The King Arthur Flour Cookie Companion offers 400-plus recipes for almost every cookie under the sun--from traditional favorites like oatmeal and chocolate chip cookies (13 recipes including the soft and crisp kinds, plus 11 variations, such a Orange-Pistachio Milk Chocolate Chippers); to global treats like shortbread, tuiles, springerle, and biscotti; to all kinds of bars and soft bites such as brownies, Whoopie Pies, and Hot and Sweet Ginger Squares.

The bakers have singled out eight essential cookies—chocolate chip, oatmeal, sugar, peanut butter, shortbread, molasses-ginger, brownies and biscotti—and offer both traditional and exotic recipes, as well as variations and decorating tips to allow for bursts of inspiration. www.amazon.com

Gingerbread Architect: Recipes and Blueprints for Twelve Classic American Homes



What happens when an architect, who is also an avid baker, gets together with a house-obsessed pastry chef? Twelve classic American homes rendered in gingerbread.

The Gingerbread Architect will guide you every step to build your gingerbread dream house. Are you dreaming of a colonial Christmas? Here's your chance to build your own traditional Cape Cod house complete with breath-mint pinnacles, Twizzler shingles, and a brick-red fruit-leather chimney. Would you prefer nineteenth-century New York elegance? Why not whip up an urban brownstone, embellished with crushed butterscotch windows, Tootsie Roll staircase posts, and a front courtyard tiled in mini Chiclets. Is the Santa Fe look more your style? Try a gingerbread pueblo, landscaped with rock-candy cacti and turbinado-sugar sand.

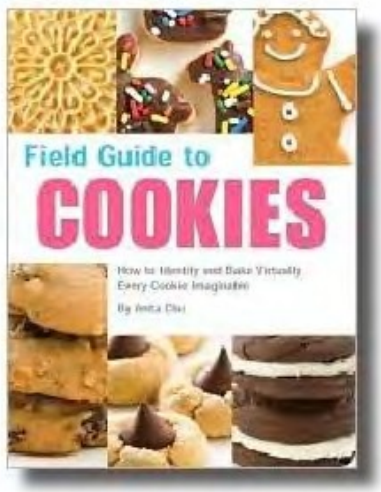
There are detailed blueprints and elevations of the houses along with baking directions, tips on the construction schedule, baking and candy resource guides, instructions for lighting the houses from within and full-color photographs of the finished houses. There are projects for bakers of all levels. The Gingerbread Architect is the complete guide to the ultimate family holiday baking project! www.amazon.com

Field Guide to Cookies

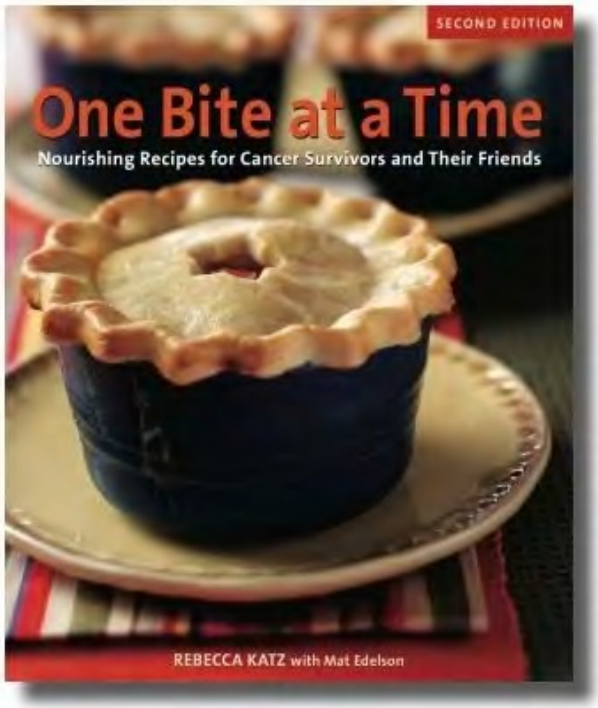
In this collection of more than 100 classic recipes, you'll discover fun trivia about this humble, hand-held sweet. Did you know that:

- the German Christmas cookies called lebkuchen were made legendary by the folktale "Hansel and Gretel"?
- a time-honored custom in France is dipping fresh-from-the-oven madeleines into tea, coffee or espresso?
- the recipe for spicy Chicksaw Pumpkin Cookies is inspired by Native American culinary traditions?

And don't let the small size of this guide fool you. It's jam-packed with expert tips on techniques, tools and ingredients, plus pretty pictures of each and every cookie! www.amazon.com



One Bite at a Time: Nourishing Recipes for Cancer Survivors and their Friends



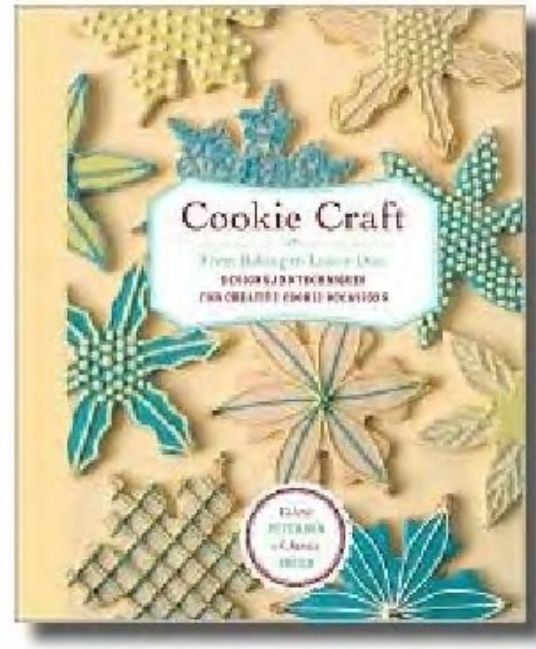
Rebecca Katz shares delicious, nourishing recipes for cancer patients, who often experience culinary ups and downs because of sudden dietary restrictions and poor appetite due to damaged taste buds from harsh treatments. One Bite at a Time was the result of many years developing and perfecting recipes, that not only taste fantastic but are easy to digest, and boost the immune system, for her father who was diagnosed with throat cancer.

One Bite at a Time has more than 85 recipes, revised and updated with 10 new recipes, this second edition provides caretakers with a tangible way to nurture loved ones through easy-to-digest meals that offer maximum flavor while boosting the immune system. It can be dauting cooking for someone with cancer but Rebecca makes it easy with One Bite at a TIme. Rebecca has helped thousands of people improve their health as they battle chronic diseases such as cancer, diabetes, and obesity. Rebecca Katz is the founder of the Inner Cook and senior chef at Commonweal Cancer Help Program in Marin County, California. She puts the "Yum" to work for you and your loved one in One Bite at a Time. www.amazon.com

Cookie Craft: Designs and Techniques for Creative Cookie Occasions

Cookie Craft gives readers access to the entire world of decorated cookies, beginning with an inspirational gallery of 150 colorful cookies guaranteed to start those creative juices flowing. The authors discuss ingredients, supplies, equipments and techniques. They include four delicious recipes for rolled cookie doughs (Traditional Sugar, Chocolate, Nutty, and Gingerbread) that provide perfect blank canvases for decorating, and, of course, their recipe for versatile Royal Icing.

They give clear instructions and pratical methods to achieve bakery-quality design and homemade fresh taste. They show you how to pipe, flood, and sugar the cookies, how to design color palettes that work with every season, how to make cookies stand up in fun 3-D structures, and much more! www.amazon.com



Vegan Lemon Bars

Recipe by Colleen Patrick-Goudreau

"Sweet, tart filling...buttery crust... Think lemon mringue pie without the meringue!"

Lemon Bars

The Joy of Vegan Baking Copyright ©2007 by Colleen Patrick-Goudreau. With permission of Fair Winds Press. All rights reserved.

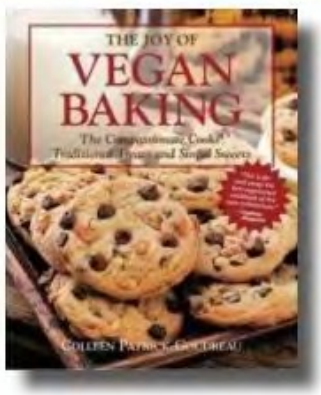
Think lemon meringue pie without the meringue! Who needs whipped egg whites anyway, when you can experience the sweet/tart lemon filling in a buttery shortbread crust?

Crust

1/2 cup (112g) non-hydrogenated, nondairy butter, at room temperature
1/4cup(25g)confectioners' sugar
1 cup (125g) unbleached all-purpose flour

Filling

1/2 cup (112g) silken tofu(soft or firm)
1 cup (200g) granulated sugar
Zest from 2 lemons
1/3 cup (90ml) fresh lemon juice (2 to 3 lemons)
2 tablespoons (8g) unbleached all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon (8g) cornstarch
Confectioners' sugar, sifted



1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (180 degrees C, or gas mark 4). Grease an 8x8-inch (20x20-cm) baking pan with canola oil (or use a cooking spray) and sprinkle with just a light dusting of all-purpose flour.

2. To make the crust, in the bowl of your electric stand mixer, or with a electric hand mixer, cream the butter and confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy. Add the flour, and beat until the dough just comes together. Press into the bottom of your prepared pan and bake for about 20 minutes, or until lightly browned. Remove from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool while you make the filling.

3. To make the filling, in a food processor or blender, add the tofu and blend until creamy, about 1 minute. Add the lemon zest, lemon juice, flour, and cornstarch. Pour the filling over the baked shortbread crust and bake for about 2 minutes, or until the filling is set. Remove from the oven and place on a wire rack to cool.

4. To serve, cut into squares or bars and dust with the sifted confectioners' sugar. Wait until you are just about to serve the bars before you sprinkle them with the confectioners' sugar. Otherwise, it will soak into the bars and you'll miss out on that pretty presentation. I think these are best eaten the day they are made, but they can be covered and stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.

Yield: Sixteen 2-inch squares.

Colleen's Tips: Zest the two lemons first, and then cut them in half and squeeze out their juice. A microplane works incredibly well for zesting lemons. Use fresh lemons to make lemon bars. Bottled lemon juice just doesn't cut it.

Get this...

Building a Gingerbread House

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You may have seen intricate gingerbread houses created by pastry chefs and displayed at Christmas. You've probably also seen the do-it-yourself kits that include a baked house and all the decorations, ready to assemble. If you're a hands-on type (without a lot of time for anything too extravagant), you'll enjoy this just-challenging-enough gingerbread house. If you're making this with children, we suggest assembling the house beforehand, then letting them add the decorations. Their patience may wear thin if they have to wait for the house to dry fully before they can start adding the candy.

CONSTRUCTION GINGERBREAD

1/2 cup (31/4 ounces) vegetable shortening
3/4 cup (6 ounces) light or dark brown sugar
3/4 cup (9 ounces) molasses
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons cinnamon
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice or ground cloves
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
4 cups (17 ounces) unbleached all-purpose flour

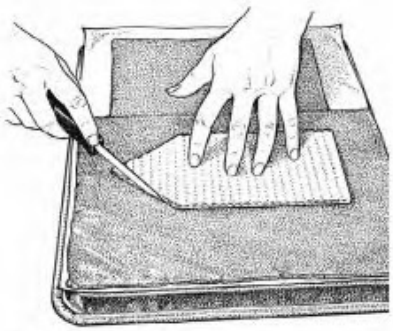
1. In a large mixing bowl, cream together the shortening and brown sugar. Add the molasses, salt, and spices, mixing to combine. Beat in the eggs, baking powder and baking soda, scraping the mixing bowl at least once. Stir in the flour. The dough will be quite stiff. Wrap the dough and let it rest at cool room temperature for 1 hour; this will make it easier to roll out.

2. Preheat the oven to 300°F.

3. Roll out the dough to a thickness of 1/4inch and cut the gingerbread pieces as illustrated at left. (Template dimensions are given opposite.) Bake the gingerbread pieces for about 20 minutes, until they're stiff and dry to the touch. Remove from the oven, cool for 10 minutes on the pan, then transfer to a rack to cool completely.

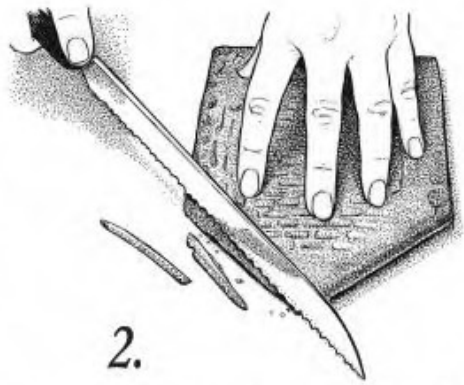
4. While the gingerbread is baking, make Royal Icing, (for the recipe go to www.dessertmag.com); this will be your construction mortar.

5. Follow the illustrated instructions on pages 83 and 84 for constructing and decorating the gingerbread house.



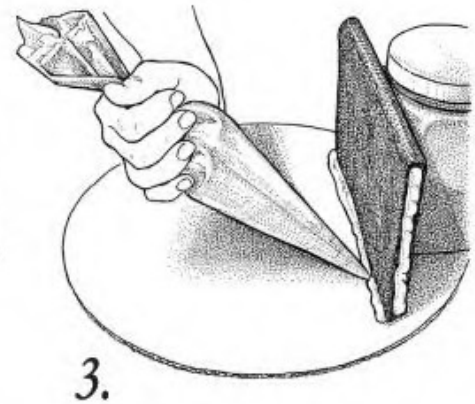
1.

Construction gingerbread can be rolled out and baked on the back of a baking sheet. A cardboard template is helpful to cut out the shapes for walls and roof.



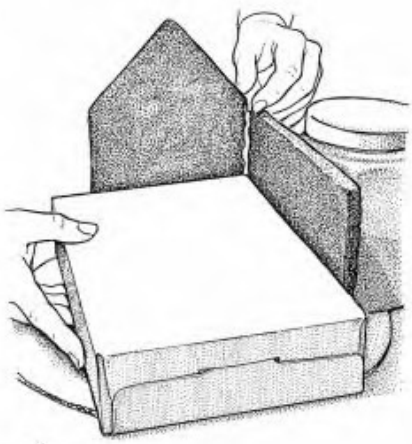
2.

After the pieces are baked, trim the edges to make them straight. This will ensure that the edges dovetail together nicely, with no gaps, when the house is assembled.



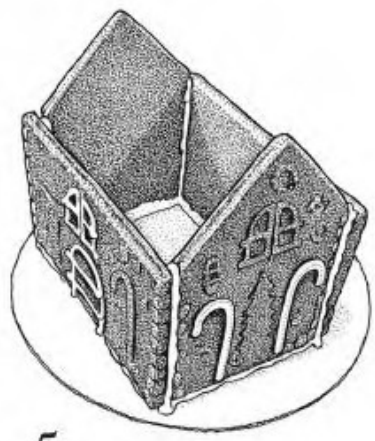
3.

To set the first side wall, run a bead of frosting along the bottom edge and up one side. Set the wall onto a piece of cardboard and prop it up with a can or jar. Run another bead of frosting along the inside edge of the wall's base, to help support it.



4.

Set up the adjoining end wall the same way. Use the corner of a box to check that they're set at right angles to each other.



5.

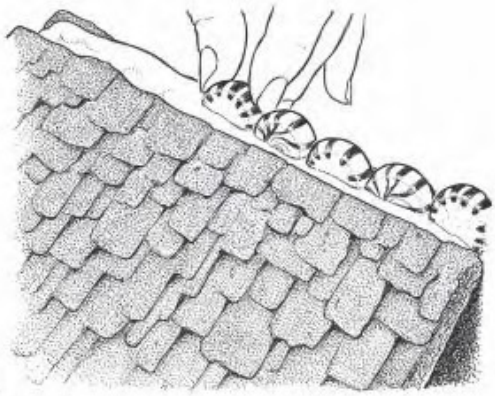
Once all four walls are in place, allow them to dry for several hours (or overnight) before adding the roof. Be sure to keep your unused royal icing tightly covered with plastic wrap while the house dries.

6.

To put the roof on, run a bead of frosting along the top edges of the walls—side, front, and back. Place the roof panels onto the frosted walls, using props to support the lower edge of the roof while the icing sets.

7.

After both roof panels are on, run another bead of frosting down the ridgeline of the roof.

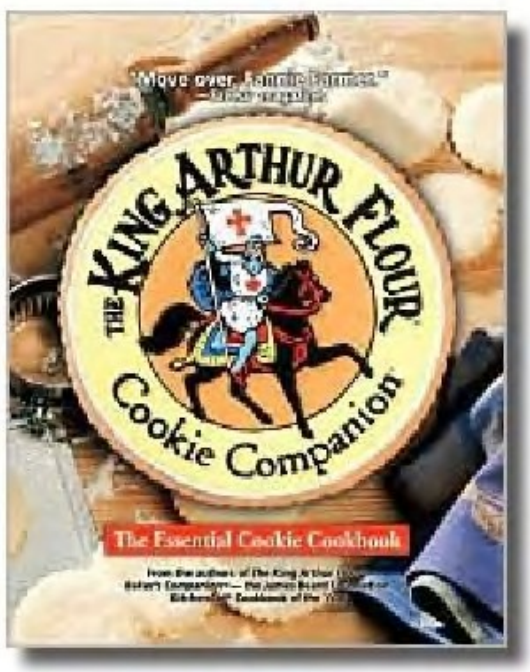


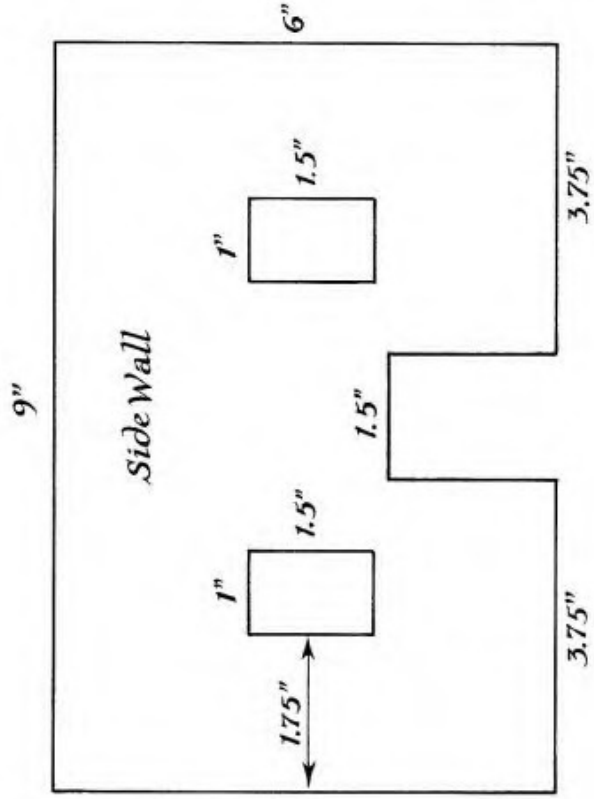
8.

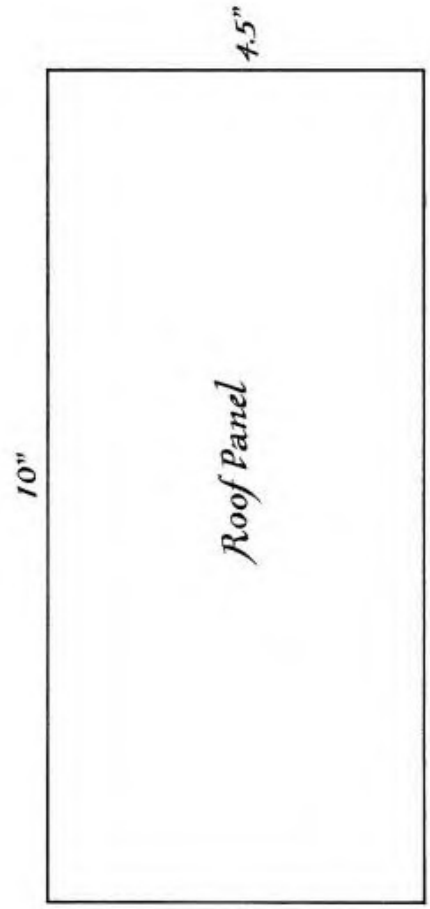
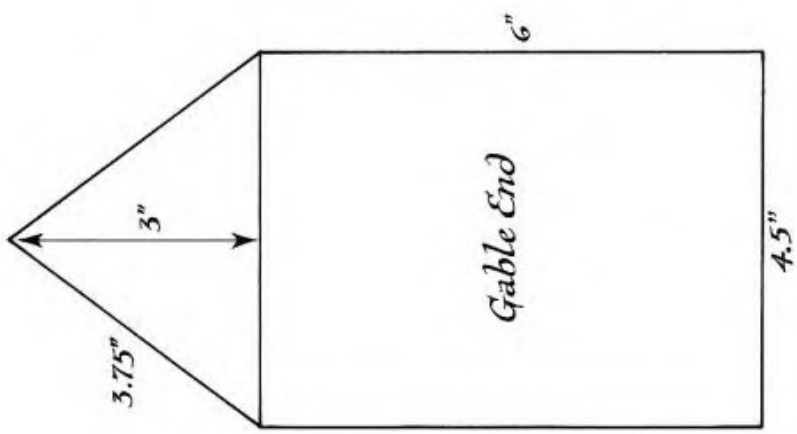
Accent the prominent architectural features of your house with candy. The only "rule" is that everything you use should be edible, because people are bound to come along and grab a sample.

9.

Highlight any of your house features—windows, doors, etc.—by outlining them with frosting. Use whatever colorful candies you like to decorate.







Use these dimensions to make templates for the side and end walls of your house (you'll need to make two of each). You'll also need to cut two 4 x 10-inch rectangles for the roof pieces.